

PROCEEDINGS

*of the fifth*

**Annual Conference on  
Mennonite Cultural Problems**



*Held at*

Freeman, South Dakota, August 27 and 28, 1946







712

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Published Under the Auspices  
of the Council of Mennonite and  
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The following schools and colleges cooperate:

Bethel College  
Beulah College  
Bluffton College  
Eastern Mennonite School  
Freeman College  
Goshen College  
Hesston College  
Messiah Bible College  
Tabor College

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for 1946 Conference

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J. Winfield Fretz, Bethel College, Secretary  
Ed. G. Kaufman, Bethel College, Council representative  
Henry G. Brubaker, Beulah College  
Paul R. Shelly, Bluffton College  
Harold H. Gross, Freeman College  
Ivan R. Lind, Hesston College  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Terminal Education for Mennonite Colleges	<i>Harold H. Gross</i>	9
Assimilation of G. I. and C. P. S. Men on the Campuses of Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges	<i>Henry G. Brubaker</i>	19
The Historical Background of the Hutterite Colonies—1528-1946	<i>J. M. Hofer</i>	25
The Present Day Social Customs and Cultural Patterns of the Hutterites in North America	<i>Marie Waldner</i>	45
The Fate of the Hutterites in Europe	<i>Robert Friedmann</i>	61
The Hutterites in England	<i>Glen R. Miller</i>	67
The Hutterites in Paraguay	<i>Willard H. Smith</i>	71
A Program of Adult Education for Mennonite Colleges	<i>Panel Discussion Summarized by Paul R. Shelly</i>	79
Implications of the Hutterian Way of Life for Other Mennonite Groups	<i>Panel Discussion Summarized by Paul R. Shelly</i>	83
An Evaluation of the Hutterian Way of Life from the Socio- logical Point of View	<i>J. Winfield Fretz</i>	87
1946 Conference Registration List		94







PROGRAM OF THE FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON  
MENNONITE CULTURAL PROBLEMS

Freeman, South Dakota, August 27 and 28, 1946

*Tuesday Morning, 9:00-12:00*

Chairman: P. E. Schellenberg, Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas.  
Opening Devotions.

Report by Ernest E. Miller, Goshen College, and Ed. G. Kaufman, Bethel College, of their trip to Europe as representatives of the Council of Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges. Their report covered the European Mennonite student exchange and study center programs as well as the general status of education in European countries.

*Tuesday Afternoon, 1:30-4:00*

Chairman: C. N. Hostetter, Jr., Messiah Bible College, Grantham, Pa.  
Devotions.

"Terminal Education for Mennonite Colleges"

Harold H. Gross, Freeman Junior College, Freeman, S. Dak.

"A Program of Adult Education for Mennonite Colleges," Panel Discussion, Roy Umble, Goshen College, chairman, Erwin C. Goering, Bethel College, Paul R. Shelly, Bluffton College, S. L. Loewen, Tabor College.

"Assimilation of G. I. and C. P. S. Men into Campus Life."

Henry G. Brubaker, Beulah College, Upland, California.

*Business Meeting, 4:15 p. m.*

Standing Committee of Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems.

*Tuesday Evening, 7:30-9:30*

Chairman: Carl Kreider, Goshen College

Devotions: Virgil Gerig, Smithville, Ohio.

"The Historical Background of the Hutterite Colonies, 1528-1946."

J. M. Hofer, Freeman, South Dakota.

"The Present Day Social Customs and Cultural Patterns of the Hutterites in North America."

Marie Waldner, Freeman Junior College, Freeman, S. Dak.

*Wednesday, 9:30 a. m.-5:00 p. m.*

Visit to the Bon Homme Bruderhof.

Topics for Discussion:

1. "Economic and Social Aspects of Colony Life."

Joe F. Waldner, Jamesville Colony, Utica, S. Dak.

2. "The Educational Program of the Hutterian Brethren."

David Decker, Tschetter Colony, Olivet, S. Dak.

3. "The Religious Views of the Hutterian Brethren."

Michael Waldner, Bon Homme Colony, Scotland, S. Dak.

Dinner at the Bruderhof. Informal visiting.

*Wednesday Evening, 7:00-9:30*

Chairman: J. D. Unruh, Freeman Junior College, Freeman, S. Dak.

Devotions: Don E. Smucker, Princeton, N. J.

"The Fate of the Hutterites in Europe."

Robert Friedmann, Western Michigan College, Kalamazoo, Mich.

"The Hutterian Brethren in England,"

Glen Miller, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

"The Hutterian Brethren in Paraguay,"

Willard Smith, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

Panel Discussion: "An Evaluation of the Hutterian Way of Life."

Carl Kreider, Goshen College

J. Winfield Fretz, Bethel College

Paul Shelly, Bluffton College

Harold Gross, Freeman Junior College.



## FOREWORD

The fifth annual conference on Mennonite cultural problems was held on the campus of Freeman Junior College at Freeman, South Dakota. Because of the proximity of this campus to a number of Hutterite communities, a study of the Hutterian way of life was the dominant theme of the cultural conference sessions. The main basis for the educational sessions of the Council of Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges was the analysis of the implications of the trip to Europe made by President Miller of Goshen and President Kaufman of Bethel during the two months prior to the conference. This trip prepared the way for the first student exchange between the Mennonites of Europe and the Mennonites of America.

In the three preceding conferences special groups of CPS men were on the college campuses and these men served as a nucleus for the group attending the conference. At Goshen in 1943 the group consisted of the men in the Relief Training Program. At Bethel College in 1944 and at Bluffton College in 1945 the group consisted of educational directors of CPS. Because of the virtual cessation of the CPS program by August 1946 no such group was represented. In spite of this fact the attendance was unusually good and representative. Eleven states were represented from as varied parts of the country as New Jersey and California. Large groups of people came from Goshen, Bethel, Bluffton and Tabor Colleges and in addition there was a very substantial local attendance.

These proceedings would not be complete without the expression of a warm word of appreciation for the hospitality shown the conference visitors, both by the Freeman Junior College administration and by the Hutterian Brethren at the Bonhomme Hutterian Colony. No summary of the discussions at the Bonhomme Colony has been included in the printed proceedings. This is unfortunate because the visit at the colony was in many respects the high point of the entire conference. The brethren at the Colony were most gracious in showing the visitors every aspect of colony life. The talks given



on the various phases of colony life were well prepared and the question period following each talk was free and open. For all who attended the conference this experience will never be forgotten.

The Mennonite Cultural Conference is now an accepted feature of inter-Mennonite collegiate cooperation. An interesting program has been prepared for the 1947 conference and many fertile ideas are held in advance for future conferences. May God continue to use this conference for the building up of His people and for the glory of His kingdom.

CARL KREIDER.

## TERMINAL EDUCATION FOR MENNONITE COLLEGES

*By Harold H. Gross*

For one with the rank of a novice in matters of academic policy, and a single year of college administration to his credit, to attempt to speak to the rather imposing—not to mention controversial—topic assigned to this paper would appear to be the height of naivete. In fact, our only qualification—if indeed it be such—in broaching this subject would seem to be that in three years of junior college teaching we have managed to prod our teaching tools into an amazingly wide range of the curriculum. However, we do not propose to undertake a discussion of, nor do we intend to outline a terminal education program as such. Our intention is the less pretentious—but perhaps more ominous—one of raising a few aspects of educational concern to the forefront for purpose of thought and later development. There are, we believe, certain issues of a definitive and general nature which need to be clarified before Mennonite colleges—or non-Mennonite for that matter—can inaugurate truly effective programs of the terminal type. There has not been time to make direct inquiry into the steps which the several Mennonite institutions have already taken in a terminal direction, though perhaps eventually some such study might profitably be made.

Let us be clear at the outset as to what the term “terminal education” itself signifies for us. As we view it, terminal education is a program of formal education arranged primarily for those who, for one reason or another, are either unable or do not care to pursue formal college training beyond the limits, ordinarily, of a maximum of one or two years. It is education designed to meet the needs of such a consciously (or unconsciously) chosen terminus of formal training. It is directed so as to function within the focus of a student’s central life-purpose or interest, and is organized around central vocational and cultural objectives, which serve the purpose of integrating what are commonly referred to quite vaguely as general

and vocational or "practical" education. The immediate and ultimate goals of such education fuse into the single purpose of fitting the student with understandings, appreciations and skills which will enrich and augment his vocational and a vocational effectiveness in community living.

While such education usually has its culmination on the junior college level—and hence constitutes a unique specialty for the junior college—yet it may and should be designed to fit the peculiar needs of many third and fourth-year students also.

As has been the case with regard to most significant adaptive movements within the sphere of educational theory and practice, terminal educational endeavor has arisen in response to a definite challenge faced in the effort of the college to meet the broadest and deepest needs of its constituency in an educational way. The curricular organization of the average college in the past has been academically geared primarily to the doubtlessly commendable purpose of producing seniors, and concomitantly to meeting requirements for later specialized vocational endeavor and admission to graduate schools. Consequently, in many instances the first few years—in particular the first two—have been burdened with the process of attempting to fit practically all students into the requirements of a single academic mold, which experience seems to have shown to be completely advantageous to only a comparative minority of the clientele served by the typical liberal arts college. At least until the recent trend toward liberal adoption of the general, the survey, and the core courses, in especially the lower division curricula, a considerable share of the lower classman's time was consumed in sampling highly specialized required offerings which were "liberal" only in the sense of giving the student dabbings within an unintegrated frame of requirements. This was essentially unfair to both the terminally destined student and the scholar with ultimate technical or more specialized interests—simply because it was neither truly liberal nor liberalizing. It gave the student with terminal needs no



well interrelated program for development of adequate social and moral intelligence; and it cheated the eventual graduate specialist or technician by failing to supply the liberal arts foundation which is indispensable in our day to this latter type of training.

But the practical consequences of such an undifferentiated program of education find their most evident implication in the fact often observed by educators that an amazingly high percentage of underclassmen, who upon matriculation expected to continue their education through four years of college, drop out at the end of the second year or at least before completing four years.

W. C. Eells reported in 1936 (*Junior College Journal*, VII, No. 1, October, 1936) a study he had made of some ten thousand junior college students concerning their plans for continued education beyond the two years of junior college. The student continuation-expectancy amounted to 80%, with an uncertainty proportion of 15%, and with 5% having conscious *terminal* intentions. After a lapse of six years these same students were questioned again. And now of the entire group, only 21% had actually gone beyond junior college. There would seem to be a strong indication on the basis of this study that what one might call the typical junior college student is, by and large, a terminal student, regardless of his own expectations. However, with reference to the implications of this study for all two-year college students, there may or may not be significance, psychologically and statistically—so far as ultimate student intention is concerned—in the mere fact that the students surveyed were enrolled in institutional junior colleges as such. That is to say, the junior college as a two-year institution might be a selective agency, introducing into Eells study a control factor which hinders extensive generalization concerning student intention inconclusive. Nevertheless, on the basis of observation and considerable opinion, one is drawn to the conclusion that an amazingly large proportion of underclassmen intentionally or unintentionally terminate their college careers with the sophomore year.

Within the fold of our own Mennonite colleges there has developed a profound consciousness of the need for terminal programs, simply on the basis of observable drop-outs over a period of years. As reported in the North Central Association monograph entitled, *Better Colleges—Better Teachers*, by Russell M. Cooper and Collaborators, Goshen college observed over an eleven-year period "that, as in most colleges, the greatest exodus occurred after the freshman year with a sizable group leaving after the second year and a few dropping out thereafter," for varied reasons. The Goshen study committee "emphasized that a large proportion of these students had completed the education which they had contemplated or had lacked funds to continue, and that for such students, frankly, 'We serve as a junior college with a terminus somewhat short of a full four-year course.'" (pp. 38, 39). With proper vision, Goshen authorities undertook to formulate a program of terminal-type education for two-year students, with requirements and training of a general nature, eventuating in the conferring of an associate in Arts degree. Under this arrangement, if the student should decide later to complete his college work, he can still earn the A.B. without great inconvenience, by completing certain additional requirements.

Freeman has provided for a two-year college course of the same sort, as other schools among the Mennonite group either have done so or are contemplating doing so.

A minimal conclusion, at least, which one might draw from study and observation, is surely that somehow within the four-year program of our colleges the education of, let us say, the two-year drop-out student must be enriched and adapted to his specific needs. In a day of emphasis on "individual differences" full cognizance should also be taken of such "individualized needs."

There would ordinarily seem to be two main areas in which a great deal can be accomplished by way of satisfying the terminal needs of our students, and, fortunately, these are areas in which some advance has already been

made in progressive schools. Broadly speaking, one facet of the problem is curricular in nature, being a concern of departmental interrelations, subject content, presentation, and administrative policy. The other concerns the area of testing and counseling for the purpose of distinguishing, as soon and as definitely as possible, the terminal student from the non-terminal. Granted that much has been accomplished in both areas in recent times, yet one has the feeling that the interrelated workings of these two areas has not been emphasized sufficiently. So often curriculum and counseling or testing specialists have, in practice at least, tended to view their functions as discreet and exclusive activities, particularly under influence of the student-centered emphasis in recent years.

One wonders to what extent the modern college—including the Mennonite—has remained under the spell of the educational climate—tacit or explicit—which views the student preeminently as the beneficiary of textual and lecture influences, including a modicum of participation in laboratory “activity,” which were somehow supposed to inculcate a certain vague Deweyan entity called “educational experience,” given direction by another presumably neutral and non-doctrinaire benefactor called the “scientific approach.” It is interesting to observe the reaction by credit evaluators, to the GED tests which are designed to test this thing called “experience”—which one sometimes is tempted to define in a matter not unlike that by which Dr. Fosdick’s parishioner defined God; an “oblong blur.” For experience is usually experience of something quite definite. But so frequently the clarification of this definite something which is of major importance in education, is neglected in the modern-day concern over techniques, methodologies, and the so-called “spirit of free inquiry.”

As important as curriculum revision and adaptation to new needs actually is; and as significant as testing results and counseling procedures are in themselves, these manipulations of curriculum and student are at bottom, we believe, but manifestations of what has become almost



an all-consuming educational passion in our day: namely concern over the "how" of educational practice.

Modern educational theory, as well as scientific and philosophical practice in the schools, have, in the main, been more largely concerned with methodology and intellectual inquiry as such, along with the development of understandings and skills which are obviously indispensable apparatus to the pursuance of "facts" and the manipulation of subject matter. The net result tends to be an over-all conformity of academic standards and course requirements primarily to the needs of individuals whose occupations necessitate a certain expertness in such methodological functions and skills. And meanwhile perhaps the broader and deeper culturalizing functions of liberal arts education have, willy nilly, been underemphasized. One wonders whether this has been to some extent the case even in Mennonite colleges. It is easy in our day to confuse the development of social and moral intelligence with adeptness in analyzing problems, and the careful tracing of historical sequences along with an avoidance of opinionation and indoctrination—as though even scientific method and spirit operated somehow in a vacuum, free from the pressures of personal beliefs and presuppositions, philosophical, religious and otherwise. And though we might not deny the need for a certain amount of indoctrination and stress on personal commitments, we are often prone to fail to make clear, in what we call Christian education, what the underlying presuppositions of our whole, shall we say Mennonite, outlook are, and articulate their inner ramifications throughout the entire curriculum. Christian education is not confined to the formulation of Bible doctrines alone, and the carry-over of the Christian spirit and principles to so-called secular fields is not an automatic contagion from the Bible department, so far as the educative process itself is concerned. These doctrines are themselves expressions of fundamental Christian beliefs and assumptions which underlie our interpretation of the entire structure of curricular offerings—including even the fine arts and the physical sciences which are sometimes neglected in this

respect in favor of stress on the social sciences in so far as relating them to our Mennonite way of thinking and living is concerned. There is danger that we will narrow down our horizon for Mennonite thinking, and in the process slight some significant values. One thinks, for instance, of Professor Klassen's work at Bluffton and of how little even educated Mennonites as a whole appreciate it. Perhaps in this day of atomic science our Mennonite scientists have a mission to fulfill which could well be unique in the way of relating science to life.

It is possible in a college dedicated to Christian education that subjects such as science and art, for instance, will be taught under consecrated Mennonite Christian tutelage without much trace of the characteristically Mennonite outlook. Our fundamental concern at this point is that since a satisfactory program of terminal education in *Mennonite* colleges involves the impartation not only of vocational skills but of a rich cultural foundation above all else—interpreted on the basis of principles underlying what we call our Way of Life—it is necessary that we have a more explicitly defined and consciously understood philosophy (or if that word bothers us, *theory*) of Mennonite Christian education. I fear that in this respect the teaching in some areas of our curricula is undifferentiated from that in non-Mennonite colleges. I respectfully submit that it is not enough to base a program of the type in which we are interested merely on the hope that Christian Mennonite consecration alone on the part of teachers will guarantee the sort of education which we desire.

There are problems to be faced in relating terminal and regular curricula happily within the framework of a single institution's course offerings. It seems, however, to be the consensus of students of the problem that during the first two years of work should be of a quite general nature for both the terminal and regular curricula, with differences to be determined to a large degree by thorough counseling. However, there is a point at which this inter-curricular relationship can be more satisfactorily facilitated and more adequately integrated: and for Mennonite colleges this

central core is to be supplied at the point where all fields are related—that is to say, at the point of a Mennonite educational philosophy which is more than merely tacit. To insure an effective and meaningful program of terminal, as well as of regular, Christian education, it will be required of us that we articulate in no ambiguous terms—so that all who teach may understand—that philosophy which underlies all our educative efforts, and one which is distinctly and distinctively Mennonite.

There is a sense in which the problems and opportunities of the separate junior college differ rather distinctly from those of the senior college. Junior college instruction can perhaps more easily be geared to the needs purposes of two-year terminal and preparatory education, owing to the fact that such an institution can give its undivided attention, paradoxically, to specialization in general education. One advantage is that its faculty is not required to divide its instructional attention between two distinct levels of student experience.

Then, too, there are advantages for terminal education in a single institution's operation of a high school in conjunction with a junior college. Besides functioning as a "feeder" for the junior college, the high school—particularly senior high—affords opportunities for joint curricula of the terminal type with the college. At Freeman, for example, there is opportunity for high school juniors to begin terminal-type long-range courses, with agricultural, home making, Biblical, or commercial emphases, among other possibilities. Individuals following these curricula must meet with certain specific requirements designed to qualify them for non-academic vocations and services as Christian citizens in rural or town life.

While, as previously intimated, senior colleges will perhaps find it somewhat difficult to adjust terminal to regular curricula, there is recourse in the fact that, on the lower level at least, the old dichotomy between general and technical vocational education is progressively being recognized as not entirely real. In truth, failure to see this is in part responsible for the plethora of college graduates



whose general education leaves them incompetent occupationally, and others who with occupational adequacy are bereft of moral and cultural competence. In the opinion of the president of a technical school, Rochester Athenaeum and Mechanics Institute, "it is the sheerest kind of 'tommyrot' to say that we are concerned in schools with providing experiences compatible with the developmental demands of students so that they will progressively be enabled to live a richer and fuller life and make no provision for any sort of occupational experience: when such experiences are provided, they frequently are organized in a special technical school, and they, in turn, become preoccupied with the single aspect of earning a living." (Mark Ellington in Chapter III of *Terminal Education in Higher Institutions*, Ed. by Russell, p. 36).

It is, we believe, a fundamental presupposition of the Mennonite faith, underlying the doctrine of the simple life, that the cultural life apart from a concrete vocational locus is meaningless. Perhaps it is one of the special missions of Mennonite education, terminal and otherwise, to send forth people from its colleges who are fitted with a meaningful Christian philosophy of life and way of living, and with vocational and avocational training which sees the fundamental unity of all life and thought in all of its simplicity and richness.





## ASSIMILATION OF G. I. AND C. P. S. MEN ON THE CAMPUSES OF MENNONITE AND AFFILIATED COLLEGES

*By Henry G. Brubaker*

The great international human conflagration generally known as World War No. II, put the Mennonite Churches of America, including Canada, on their honor. From the beginning the United States Government challenged her great historic peace churches to take care of the boys who were conscientiously unable to take part in military affairs in any form. This task and responsibility was courageously accepted on the basis of faith in God and faith in the genuinely non-resistant people.

In the acceptance of this stupendous task, the Mennonite and affiliate churches played a major role. All of us have experienced great satisfaction over the marked success which has accompanied our tireless efforts. Virtually out of nothing, there sprang within a few months a great organization and chain of C. P. S. Units which spanned the American continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

This display of ingenuity and resourcefulness at a time when our conscientious Christian boys and men needed our assistance most, can again be called into operation. This time the versatility of our resourcefulness rests rather heavily upon our colleges.

During the war it was rather evident that the pendulum swing of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ convictions relative to war was much more extended than the Civilian Public Service program. In becoming candidly realistic we are obliged to face the statistical records of the Mennonite and affiliate churches who sponsor education via schools and colleges. These statistical records show that only fifty per cent of our boys and men entered Civilian Public Service. The other fifty per cent entered military service, with the exception of a few who, for some reason or other, entered prison.

There is one gratifying factor in all this wide spread of service. It is this: that regardless of the type of service into which our boys entered, they registered themselves as conscientiously opposed to war. This factor has not been whole heartedly recognized and admitted back in the respective home congregations. In fact if a representative sampling and observation was made by the writer of this paper, the major concentration of congregation interest in this wide spread variety of service was merely a debate on the relative merits of one type of service as pitted against the other type of service. And in addition to this, there was heated discussion as to where the boys were able to do the greatest amount of service for Christ, especially in personal as well as group evangelism. These arguments did not always remain with the laity. The arguments were also often so marked and heated that the tension approached almost to the breaking point. They tended to sidestep the peace issue, and thus lost sight of the cardinal concern relative to the boys' conscience against war.

At this point our schools and colleges are greatly interested and concerned that this type of unfortunate situation does not strike their campuses in this post war period. Today we are asking ourselves the question: how can we assimilate the G. I. and C. P. S. men on our Campuses?

First of all, the colleges have had a chance to become realistically aware of the fact that the young men of our churches were about equally divided in choosing civilian service and non-combatant military service in responding to the Selective Service call. We must not only be mentally aware of this fact, but we must be emotionally prepared to receive them onto our campuses on an equal basis, giving them equal status.

What I am trying to say is that our colleges must prove themselves bigger at this point than do our average church congregations. If we discriminate in favor of the one group or the other, we are immediately off to a poor start. This, therefore, must not happen among us. If we want to be successful in assimilating both groups at the same time, it will be needful for us to adjust ourselves to the

larger approach to which I referred earlier, namely: that each service group was conscientiously opposed to war. In this way we function on as wide a base as our boys expressed themselves in the type of service rendered to their country, even though as peace churches we might wish that all of our boys might have been led to express their peace testimony through civilian rather than military channels.

In becoming realistic in some such way as this we continue to have a chance to mould the thinking of all of our men in the direction of the Christian philosophy of peace as we see it. We can ever edge in the direction of practising peace without making an issue of the specific form of service followed. In fact if we now take a stand on a specific form of service, the next war time may not make provision for the particular type of service for which we might stand now. Futuristic reality would therefore also point in the direction of taking a position on this wider base.

Our colleges are consciously aware of the fact that the Christian philosophy of peace has much wider cultural implications than any single form of service expression could have. Such an awareness brings a favorable response from all types of service men. They are likely to be more easily influenced through a cultural approach rather than through an emotional approach. The rank and file of the laity tend in the direction of the emotional and as a result they disturb one or the other group and sometimes both groups. We can well profit by this observation and give the cultural approach every advantage and save our boys from experiencing unnecessary conflict. Emphasizing some form of overt expression is too shallow, but arriving at a deep conviction through a cultural and philosophic channel is not only more meaningful to the service men in college, but also makes for greater permanency.

The second major problem that needs frank consideration in assimilating the C. P. S. and G. I. men on our campuses is the fact that the average age of these men is several years higher than the average age of the college student of pre-war days. Many are married and have their



families with them. This advanced age means greater maturity and more independent thinking. The variety of experience, both in the homeland and abroad, makes for a wider and a richer background. Their exposures to multi-various philosophies, ideologies, and religious views all tend to provoke in them a philosophy of life which is often rather contrary to the usually accepted pattern of campus thinking.

The faculties of our colleges will do these men a service if they understand them rather than to attempt to set them aright in thought and attitude. These men are mature enough to take care of themselves. They are not likely to relish anything that savors of paternalism. They are no longer "teen-agers" who need to be guarded by a super-sensitive faculty. Their lot in life the past few years has made them tough and unafraid. They have developed mental and emotional callouses which are not so easily removed. These callouses will persist. It will take years of moral and spiritual catabolic processes to absorb these callouses into the cultural fibers of their being so that they are no longer noticed by the average faculty of our campuses. These callouses will not be obliterated in one short student generation. These men need, therefore, to be stimulated to go on from where they are rather than to be thwarted by attempting to over-orient them into a set pattern which may have very little significance to them. The last few years for them have been horizon lifting years. This they want continued. Only wide awake faculties with up-to-the-minute information in their respective fields can accomplish this for them. They want to feel that the faculty leaders are acquainted with the present day affairs of life. If they find the faculty entrenched in the status quo of yester-year, they shall not be so likely to undergo campus assimilation. As faculties we shall be on the spot if we have not kept abreast of the times in our thinking, in our research, and in our scholarship—as these pertain to human affairs as well as to the fields of our specialization.

If we have a sense of alarm when we face these realities

concerning these C. P. S. and G. I. students, we must remind ourselves that they are no longer mere boys in their later teens and early twenties, but men who have matured beyond their years. This high speed maturation was not through any choice of their own, but was forced upon them. They were weaned from home and immediate church environment and were thrust out pretty much on their own, and they made the best of it. And, now we are challenged to take them where they find themselves and to assimilate them as they are, and not as we might like them to be.

Mennonite and affiliate colleges, the task is ours to acclimate these men to our campuses. The responsibility is not too great. We are well able, under the guidance of God, to challenge these service men regardless of the type of service to which they responded, by first of all giving them status as full fledged and normally curious students. In the second place, we assimilate them by honoring their maturity as it is expressed in independent acting and thinking. We assimilate them by the third enveloping force of psychologically understanding them and meeting them with up-to-date scholarship as it relates to their problems and needs in following their particular areas of interest, investigation, and research. The foregoing is therefore submitted as pointing in the direction of what needs to be realized if we wish to assimilate the C. P. S. and G. I. on the campuses of the Mennonite and affiliate colleges.



## THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE HUTTERITE COLONIES—1528-1946

*By J. M. Hofer*

The seventy-two Hutterite colonies presently located in South Dakota, Montana, Alberta and Manitoba, with a population of approximately 10,000, had their first origin in 1528, more than 400 years ago. It was a time when many religious groups were breaking away from the Apostolic Church and organizing their own congregations. Dr. Balthasar Hubmaier had in 1526 organized at Nikolsburg in Moravia a congregation of over 6,000 members. He held the following basic principles:

1. Adult baptism upon confession of faith,
2. The Lord's Supper as a memorial feast,
3. Separation from the world,
4. Non-resistance,
5. Opposition to the oath and swearing,
6. The ban as a method of church discipline.

The members of this very large congregation at Nikolsburg had come from many directions and nationalities. They were the persecuted from Switzerland, South Germany, the Tyrol, Schleswig, Upper Austria and many other places. As they worshipped together and discussed their religious beliefs, many disagreements and differences came to the foreground. The two major issues which finally caused a split into a liberal and a more conservative branch were non-resistance and the community of goods. Since the Turks were threatening to invade Moravia at that time, many of the brethren held that although it was wrong to bear arms, nevertheless, when the government calls, one had to obey to protect the homeland. The conservative group, which was by far the smaller in number, believed that a follower of Christ cannot bear arms under any circumstances and that the only Christian way of life is the one which the early Church of Jerusalem followed of which we read in Acts, Chapter 2, namely that they



held all things in common. The leader of this group was Jacob Wiedeman. His followers numbered 200, counting the adults only.

In 1528 Wiedeman with his 200 followers and their families left the Nikolsburg congregation, so that they might organize a church according to their own religious beliefs. They decided to journey to Austerlitz, a town about twelve miles southeast of the present city of Brünn, where they sought refuge on the vast estates of the four Kaunitz brothers. On the journey to the Kaunitz estates, this little group stopped at a small village by the name of Bogenitz for the night. Here four assistants were elected to aid their leader. These four, on that memorable evening spread a mantle on the ground and everyone placed his worldly goods and possessions on it. Thus was founded the community way of life, a system which to this day is practiced by the Hutterite colonies of South Dakota and Canada. It is of interest to note that the name of one of these four assistants was Jacob Mandel, a Bohemian. This name Mandel is to this day a very common one among the Hutterite brethren.

When Wiedeman and his 200 followers with their families arrived at the Kaunitz estates, they were warmly welcomed by the noblemen and here on these estates in 1528 they organized and built the first community households.

Wiedeman himself was a man of strong convictions and unquestionable honesty and integrity, but he lacked qualities of leadership. For this reason it was frequently necessary to appeal to a certain Jacob Hutter, a Tyrolian, also known as Jacob of Welfsberg, who was by trade a hat-maker, for assistance and advice. Hutter was a strong believer in the community way of life and between 1528 and 1533 he often came to the Austerlitz congregation to visit. When the persecuted from other lands came to him, he directed them to Austerlitz. Finally, in 1533, he came with a large group of Tyrolians and joined the brethren, thus greatly strengthening the group, numerically as well as financially. It was not long before Hutter himself, be-

cause of his ability as a leader and organizer, replaced Wiedeman as the head of the congregation. He introduced the strictest discipline and erased every trace of private ownership and privilege between leaders and members.

Hutter was not destined to remain for very long the leader of the congregation he had so ably organized and led for three years. Persecution soon set in, and in 1536 he was burned at the stake after being captured at night at the home of a friend where he had sought refuge. It is significant to remember that, during these three years of leadership, he established an organization that has remained practically unchanged for more than four centuries. Is it little wonder that these colonies which are the subject of our study at this Cultural Conference have ever since borne the name of Hutterite colonies after Jacob Hutter?

After 1536 the persecution began to subside. The Moravian nobles took a determined stand against the Imperial orders to drive out all Anabaptists. These people were excellent agriculturalists and tradesmen, and the noblemen were unwilling to part with them. From 1550 until King Ferdinand's death in 1564 there was a period of suffering and persecution, known in Hutterite chronicles as "the time of the great persecution."

The reign of Maximillian II (1564-1576) and the first half of his successor's reign (1576-1612) was a time of comparative freedom from molestation and is termed by the chronicles as "the good time of the church." Once more their communities prospered under the Moravian nobles who successfully withstood the occasional demands of the Austrian rulers that all Anabaptists be driven out of the land. One reliable historian lists the names of eighty-six different Hutterite communities or households in Moravia and Hungary during this prosperous era. Each of these households had a population of from three to four hundred.

These communities were primarily agricultural. They had fine breeds of horses and cattle, vineyards and flour mills. They were also skilled in the handicrafts. They manufactured cutlery, linen and pottery. They had first

class weavers. Their workmen were highly trained and were often employed by the nobles as administrators and superintendents of mills, gardens and farms. They had able physicians, one of whom is reported in 1581 to have been consulted with good results by Emperor Rudolph II after other physicians in Italy and Spain had failed in their efforts to aid him.

In these Hutterite communities, everyone did what he was best fitted for. The proceeds derived from the earnings of each individual, however, went into the community treasury. No remuneration was to be kept secret and if such was the case, it was considered theft and if detected meant expulsion from the community unless penance was done. Food, clothing and any expenses that might be incurred were all taken from the community chest, so that no one lived in want as long as there was anything in the storehouse. Orphans and widows were cared for with the same degree as those who worked. No one was in want.

The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) marked the beginning of a slow but constant decline in the life of the Hutterite communities. During this war, many armies marched through their territory and ravaged the country as they went along. Since the Hutterite way of living involved the storing of vast amounts of food-stuffs and other raw materials, they were usually the first objects to attract the attention of the soldiers, who were sent out to collect food and supplies for their armies. Their vast granaries and storehouses were often plundered and destroyed and the men in charge were tortured and killed.

On September 22, 1622, the Austrian government issued a decree that all Hutterites were to leave Moravia within four weeks from date under penalty of death. Winter was coming on and there were many sick and aged. The autumn seeding had just been completed and their storehouses were filled with grain and wine. The chronicles of the Hutterites report that they had to leave twenty-four households filled with barley, wheat and oats, 130 head of cattle, 150 horses, 70 oxen, 655 hogs, 300 barrels of wine, cloth, linen, salt,



lard, wool, copper and tools in the shops, all conservatively estimated at \$367,000 in value. All this was confiscated by the Austrian government, and during the winter following food could not be purchased anywhere, even at sky high prices.

The Hutterites had during their period of expansion established three households in Hungary, namely Sabotisch, Protska and Lewar. Since the Hungarian government tolerated a certain amount of religious liberty at that time, the persecuted Hutterites, who had been driven from their homes in Moravia sought refuge with their brethren in Hungary at the above named communities. It was a serious and difficult matter indeed for three households to house so many newcomers, all of whom came empty handed just before winter set in. Sabotisch, the smallest of the households, lodged 3,000 refugees during the winter. Because of the shortage of food supplies, many of the younger men found employment among the Hungarian nobles and in that way earned food for themselves and their fellow-brethren.

But even during the period of the Thirty Years War there were times when the Hutterites prospered and these periods of prosperity were most always paralleled with an increase in worldliness.

Andreas Ehrenpreis, their elder, paints a pessimistic picture when he writes in 1639: "Many Brethren try to evade work. The neighbors say the Hutterites are the last to commence work in the morning and the first to stop work in the evening. The sisters have given way to vanity. They wear rustling skirts and gold buckles on their belts. There is excessive eating and drinking. Many drink more than is good for them. Many are dishonest in paying back into the community treasury all the proceeds of their earnings from the sale of forks, knives, etc."

The Thirty Years War was followed by the still more ruthless Turkish wars and again the Hutterites lay in the paths of the invaders. The large storehouses of grain found in their households as well as their large herds of live stock were inducements for the Turkish armies to



come and carry off these rich spoils. Furthermore, the brethren were believers in non-resistance and so the Turks carried off horses, cattle, wine, grain, manufactured articles, money and whatever else could be found without the least effort of resistance.

By 1665, the Hutterites were reduced to the most abject poverty and were forced to send representatives to Holland to beg aid of the Mennonites of that country. The aid was very generously given. In 1686 the brethren decided to abandon community living until the repeated raids of the Turks would cease. The large stores of supplies in one place seemed unwise. They thought that if they would live in scattered places, the Turks would not be so apt to raid their storehouses. The property was divided among the members of the brotherhood and everyone returned to private ownership.

During the eighteenth century, the story of the Hutterites was a real struggle for survival. Circumstances forced them to change back and forth from community living to private ownership and vice versa. Their membership gradually declined because of repeated raids by the Turks and persecution by the Catholics. By 1760, the chronicler reports four Hutterite households or communities—Sabotisch with 220 members, Grossschützen with 197, Trentchen with 144 and St. Johann with 80 members.

During the decade beginning with 1760 the Jesuits secured from Maria Theresa the permission to employ more stringent measures to convert the brethren to Catholicism. Their homes were searched; their books were burned. Most of their ministers were imprisoned and were there instructed by the Jesuits. The Jesuits promised to free them on condition that they become Catholic. Hutterite churches were closed and Catholic ones were opened in their place. Soldiers were stationed in Hutterite homes and were lodged and fed at the expense of the brethren.

After a time of such treatment, the brethren were extended an offer by which they were permitted to have their own congregations and services provided they become Catholic. They could then have their own teachers and

ministers and be exempted from military service. This offer was accepted by many. This group of Catholic Hutterites was known as "Habaner." The word "Habaner" in the Slavic language means lubber or an awkward person. The Hutterite people today use the word "lup" which means identically the same.

The "Habaner" have always been looked upon with a good deal of disdain by their former brethren who kept the faith. It has always been the policy of the Hutterites to die for principles rather than recant and today while the "Habaner" still exist as a small group in Slovakia, their former brethren, the Hutterites, who remained true to the faith, are prospering in America.

By 1760 due to persecution the number of loyal Hutterites had dwindled to sixteen, according to the chronicles. Among these were Johann Kleinsasser, George Waldner, Peter and Joseph Mueller, Andreas Wurz, Lohrenz Tschetter, Christian Glanzer and Johann Stahl.

In 1766 Johann Stahl and a certain Joseph Chur, roamed into the Wallachia in what is now Rumania. There they found the people prosperous and evidently enjoying religious liberty. The country was one of fertile plains, fine agricultural lands and beautiful pastures. Upon their return to the brethren, they informed them of their findings and it was agreed that this was the land that God had chosen for them to live in. Leaving all their possessions and avoiding the more important highways, so as not to be detected, this mere handful of brave and God-fearing people left the Empire of Maria Theresa and crossed the Carpathians into Rumania. Lands were rented from Rumanian noblemen who were eager to have good agricultural workers. A few sod houses were erected and community housekeeping was set up not far from the city of Bucharest, the capital of Rumania. Later (1767) others who had become "Habaner" came and joined their former comrades.

The year following war again broke out between the two traditional enemies, Turkey and Russia. The old Turkish raids upon the community households again took place and with the same ruthlessness as before.

It so happened that a certain Russian general, Semetin by name, was stationed with his army on the Moldau River, near the Hutterite households. In a conversation with this general, the Hutterites were informed that Catharine the Great of Russia welcomed German agriculturalists to her country and that she would give them the most liberal offers. The Czarina was eager to develop the vast unimproved areas of her empire. Since she was a German and had great admiration for her kinsmen, she was very friendly to German settlers. General Semetin also informed the Hutterites that the Czarina would no doubt grant them exemption from military service, give them control of their own schools and a large degree of local autonomy, similar to the privileges given to other Germans, including the Mennonites. Further, the brethren were informed that Count Romanzov, a wealthy Russian nobleman, had large tracts of undeveloped lands in White Russia, and that he too was extremely eager to get good agriculturalists.

Shortly after this episode representatives of the Hutterites left their homes in Rumania for White Russia to confer with Count Romanzov regarding the possibility of finding suitable homes on his lands. General Semetin furnished the brethren with passes, tellers of introduction and all the necessary information.

Upon their arrival they found Count Romanzov very friendly and receptive. They were offered lands at Wischenka, Government Tschernigoff on the Desna River about 100 miles north east of the city of Kiev. The following agreement was drawn up between the Count and the brethren.

1. Complete religious freedom. No one shall be forced to take the oath.
2. Exemption from military service.
3. No interference with community living.
4. Freedom from rent and taxation for three years.
5. For the first three years every member shall be supplied free of all charge with a reasonable measure of flour daily.



6. Thirty rubles shall be advanced to help pay expenses for journey to Wischenka, and upon arrival money and lumber shall be advanced for building purposes.
7. A reasonable amount of rent after three years for hay and gardens.
8. The Hutterites are at liberty to leave at any time provided they leave one-tenth of their property to the Count.
9. Cash rent for homes and acreage after three years.
10. If construction of houses cannot be completed by winter, others shall be given them for use.
11. The brethren to be furnished with eighty tons of hay for cattle.
12. Each one shall be allowed to practice his trade or sell the manufactured article without any charge whatsoever.

The Hutterites were highly elated to receive these terms from the Count. After all the terms were agreed upon they began their homeward journey. A sergeant and ten cossacks accompanied them, for as the Count remarked, they and their property might need protection in making the journey from Rumania to Wischenka.

On August 1, 1770, the Hutterites arrived at their new homes on the Desna River. Hay was made and houses and barns were constructed. When winter came they were all comfortably lodged with plenty for themselves and their live stock. In the spring every tradesman set up his trade, such as tailor, shoemaker, tanner, hat maker, weaver, potter. The farmers commenced their work in the fields, and mills were constructed. A time of real opportunity followed, and in a comparatively short period the communities became wealthy.

When Count Romanzov died in 1796 things began to change for the Hutterites. His son, the heir to the vast estates, was a greedy and merciless tyrant and demanded rents and services beyond reason. When Czar Alexander I heard of their troubles and oppressions, relief came. The Czar had crown-lands twenty miles from Wischenka which he was anxious to develop. Having heard that the

Hutterites were excellent wheat growers and industrialists, he offered them these lands on terms similar to those that Count Romanzov had given thirty-two years before. He offered them a tract of 775 desjatinen or 2,000 acres and advanced \$4,000 to assist in the speedy building of improvements. This community was called Roditchawa.

At Roditchawa, the new home of the Hutterites, life for the next eighteen years was difficult and hard. There was considerable quarreling with the native Russians, who were their neighbors, and the experiences which the brethren had with them were not all pleasant. Petty thievery was one of the popular hobbies of the Russians and the Hutterite households and private farms were excellent targets for that kind of mischief. Not infrequently the red-blooded Hutterite youth employed more than peaceful means to drive off these unwelcome night marauders.

There must also have been dissension among the brethren themselves for in 1819, when a household burned down, there was not sufficient enthusiasm left to rebuild it. One reason may have been lack of funds. Following the destruction of this Roditchawa household in 1819 the brethren divided the property among the members and returned to private ownership for a number of years. However, they still held together intact as a group, holding their religious meetings as before but without community housekeeping.

In 1842 the Russian Government offered the Hutterites better lands in Southern Russia near Jekatarinaslaf in the Valley of the Molotchna River 500 miles from Roditchawa. This area was an exceptional grain region adapted to the culture of rye and wheat. Each of the fifty families was given sixty-five desjatinen or 175 acres of land. The country was more or less unimproved, but very fertile. Here the Hutterites founded four villages, Hutterthal, named after Jacob Hutter in 1842, Johannesruh, named after Johann Cornies, 1852, and Hutterdorf and New Huttertahl in 1857.

Hutterite communism in South Russia was not so successful. The brethren petitioned the Russian govern-

ment for permission to organize a bruderhof in 1845, but due to the influence of Johann Cornies, who opposed it, the petition never brought results. Two community households or bruderhöfe were founded in 1860 and 1861, namely Hutterdorf and Scheromet, under the leadership of Michael Waldner and Darias Walter. The major group of the Hutterites, however, remained as private land owners living in villages according to Russian customs.

One must not underestimate the contributions of Johann Cornies toward the welfare and prosperity of the Hutterites. Even though he did not agree with their communistic schemes they owe much to his wisdom. Cornies had come as a boy of sixteen from West Prussia in Germany in 1805 and became a most influential character among the Mennonites and Hutterites of South Russia until his death in 1848. He experimented in agriculture and live stock, in orchards and garden culture. The fact that the Hutterites are today some of the most expert and successful agriculturalists is due to a large extent to the influence of Johann Cornies who taught them how to lay out orchards and gardens, a thing which they have not neglected to this day. He encouraged them to have blooded horses, cattle and sheep. Although Cornies was a hard master while he was in charge of the Mennonites and Hutterites under the Russian government, nevertheless, both of these classes owe much to his foresight and discipline.

After a century of peace and prosperity under the Russian Czars, clouds began to appear on the horizon which indicated unrest. In 1870 the Czar, Alexander II, decreed that the Mennonites as well as the Hutterites were in the future to be no more exempt from military service, thus nullifying the privilege which they had received under Czar Paul I which guaranteed them exemption.

To make an investigation into the matter, a group of Hutterite leaders, among them Rev. Paul Tschetter, Michael Stahl and Joseph Hofer, were sent to St. Petersburg, the Russian capital, to confer with government officials. They were much concerned about their future, since it touched the very core of their religious doctrines. Upon their



arrival in St. Petersburg in February 1873 they met a number of Mennonites who were there for the same reasons. Being unacquainted in the large capital city they were assisted by the Moravian pastor, Theodore Hans, who lived in the city and who greatly sympathized with them. They spent much of their time at his home.

In an audience before Constantin Wikolagewich, one of the head officials of the Russian government, on March 6, 1873, the Hutterite delegation was told, that having lived and enriched themselves during the last century, they should now be willing to do something for the Fatherland. He intimated, however, that only sanitation and non-combatant service would be required of them.

Upon the return of the brethren from St. Petersburg, the matter of military service was discussed in the different Hutterite churches. Opinions varied. Some were of the impression that the government was fair and reasonable in its concessions and that these terms should be accepted. Others thought that the future was dark and that they should, as had been their custom for centuries, seek homes elsewhere where they could worship according to the dictates of their conscience. Under no conditions could one accept any kind of military service, combatant or non-combatant.

Those who were of the latter opinion considered America and selected two men, the Rev. Paul Tschetter and Lorenz Tschetter, to go to the United States to find out about conditions with the prospect of emigrating to that country if favorable and suitable lands for homes could be secured.

These two brethren left Russia April 14, 1873, traveling via Odessa, Breslau, Berlin and Hamburg. In Hamburg they boarded a steamer, arriving in New York on May 8. At Elkhart, Indiana, they learned to know John Funk, a Mennonite who became their warm friend. Funk together with a group of ten Mennonites and several railroad and government land agents accompanied them on a tour through the Middle Western States and Canada in quest of lands where suitable homes might be founded should they

decide to emigrate to the New World.<sup>1</sup> This land-seeking tour took them through the states of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, South and North Dakota and Manitoba. Government and railroad agents vied with each other, each trying to persuade them to settle on their lands, which they offered for sale at very reasonable prices. The land companies paid the expenses of the trip, food, lodging, fare, etc. Frequently they stopped at the sod or log huts of pioneer farmers in the Dakotas, Minnesota and Manitoba to get information as to how they liked the country. Almost invariably, these pioneers praised the land, for these frontiersmen were every eager to get new neighbors and settlers to come and build up the community. Frequently they met Indians and cowboys. The governors of Manitoba and Minnesota personally invited them to settle on lands under their jurisdiction. During the entire tour, detailed notes were taken on the lands they traversed, the climate, topography, soil, water, products, rainfall and people. Several places in North and South Dakota and Nebraska were selected as possibly suitable for settlement. On their return to New York City the Hutterite delegates, Paul and Lohrenz Tschetter, were taken to the home of a certain Mr. Hiller who was the agent of the Northern Pacific Railroad. They remained there for several days while negotiations for cheap lands in the West were being carried on. The agents finally compromised and offered these lands at \$3.00 per acre, but the brethren left the matter without contracting for any lands.

One more thing remained to be done before leaving for home and that was to confer with President Grant in regards to the possibility of securing exemption from military service. Preparations were made to journey to Washington in company with Hiller who was personally acquainted with the President and who was to introduce them and act as interpreter. Hiller wired the President inquiring as to whether he would be in Washington. The reply came

<sup>1</sup> The diary which Rev. Paul Tschetter wrote during this trip to America, giving in detail the events of each day, has been translated by the author from the German into English and has recently been published in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. Among other things it tells of his personal interview with President Grant. (*Mennonite Quarterly Review*, April and July numbers, 1931).

back that the President would come to New York City (Long Beach) and that he should be glad to meet them there.

On July 27, 1873, Hiller and Rev. Tschetter boarded a boat for Long Beach. An interview was arranged for eight o'clock in the evening at which time they appeared before the President and Hiller introduced Rev. Tschetter. President Grant was very friendly and listened to their case. Upon being asked as to whether exemption from military service would be granted, the president replied that the constitution guaranteed religious liberty, but he saw no reason why a certain class should be privileged more than others.

On August 2 the Hutterite delegates left for their homes in South Russia on the Cimbria and arrived there on August 28. Several weeks later the Northern Pacific Railroad and government agents sent Mr. Hiller to South Russia to visit the Hutterites and interest them in coming to America to settle. Hiller observed their fine homes and barns, their herds of live stock, their well-kept orchards and gardens, their well cultivated fields and became greatly interested in them.

During the following year, 1874, definite plans were made by a large group of Hutterites to emigrate to the United States. It should be remembered that in all these undertakings all the Hutterites, i. e., those living in the villages of Hutterthal, Johannesruh, New Hutterthal and Hutterdorf under private ownership, acted jointly with those Hutterites living in the Bruderhöfe of Hutterdorf and Scheromet.

Between 1874 and 1879 approximately one hundred families of Hutterites left their homes in South Russia, selling their property at a great sacrifice. Upon their arrival in New York City they proceeded via Detroit and Chicago to Lincoln, Nebraska. Here they remained for four weeks. The older men went out to seek suitable land where they might establish their homes, while the younger men worked at odd jobs in the city of Lincoln to help pay the living expenses of the group. The women and children remained at the immigrant house. Due to the fact that land agents



from the Dakota territory made them some very good offers, the Hutterites decided to come to Yankton, the western terminus of the Chicago and Milwaukee Railroad and the capital of the Dakota territory. This almost caused a fight between the Dakota and Nebraska land agents, the latter telling the Hutterites that if they intended to live of rocks and dust instead of bread, they were welcome to Dakota.

As the Hutterites arrived at Yankton, from 1874 to 1879, they divided about equally, fifty families choosing again to establish community households while the others chose to live on farms under private ownership. The latter settled as a group about forty to fifty miles north and west of Yankton and most of them took advantage of the Homestead Act by which each family could become the owner of 480 acres of land. This group of Hutterites has since spread to Hutchinson, McCook, Hanson, Beadle, Spink and Sully Counties as well as into North Dakota, Montana, Saskatchewan, California and other places. They are found in every line of business, trade and in the professions. Because of the fact that they have dropped community living they are in reality Mennonites and most all of them have affiliated themselves with Mennonite churches. All that they have in common with the Hutterites is a common historical background and a common dialect, which most of them still speak.

The group of fifty families (about 250 souls) who chose to establish community households again did not wish to take advantage of free lands under the Homestead Act. They did not wish to become indebted to the government for favors because that government, they said, might at some time in the future call for services in return. They were referring of course to military matters. Their desire was to purchase land and pay for it.

Because of that fact there was a very great abundance of hungry land agents around them during the first few days at the Territorial Capitol. These agents were ready to extend any assistance, whenever the purchase of lands and homes was raised. The first land deal that the Hut-

terites made was the purchase of 2500 acres from the Honorable W. A. Burleigh of Yankton, former Dakota Territory Indian Agent for a consideration of \$25,000. Of this, \$17,000 was paid in cash and \$8,000 in installments, according to an article in the Dakota Herald of August 25, 1874.

This land was located about twenty miles north and west of Yankton and upon it the Hutterites, a group of 109 souls, established the first community household or Bruderhof and named it Bon Homme. The name was taken from a small town located two miles to the west of the present Bon Homme Colony, but it had since disappeared from the map. The leader of the Bon Homme Colony was Michael Waldner, a blacksmith or Schmied by trade and the Bon Homme people have ever since been called the Schmieden Leut.

Later in 1874 another group of Hutterites arrived and under the leadership of Darius Walter established the Wolf Creek Colony, located about forty-five miles north west of Yankton. These people were called the Darius Leut because of their leader. The third group coming in 1877 established the Elm Spring Colony some twenty miles further north. They were known as the Lehrer Leut because of the fact that their leader Jacob Wipf was a teacher.

These three, Bon Homme, Wolf Creek and Elm Spring were the three mother colonies of the Hutterites. From these three colonies sprang many others and today there are seventy-two. The original membership of 250 has grown to a population of 10,000. Forty of these colonies are today located in Alberta, twenty in Manitoba, nine in South Dakota and three in Montana.

The acreage of these colonies ranges from 4,000 to 10,000 acres of land for each colony. On the average each colony owns about 700 head of cattle, 600 to 2000 hogs, 5000 to 6000 poultry, five to ten tractors ranging from the smallest to a large Diesel carrying from eight to ten plows. Each of the colonies threshes from 100,000 to 120,000 bushels of grain per year, drought years, of course, excepted. The Hutterite land deals have been some of the largest in the

history of South Dakota as well as in the Canadian provinces. The Calgary, Alberta, Daily Herald reports that their barns and granaries are some of the largest in the province.

During the depression in the 1930's these colonies experienced hardships. Many of them operated at a loss, but the more fortunate ones were always willing to help their less fortunate brethren. Thus we find as only one of the many examples that in 1932 the Bon Homme Colony sent a gift of \$25,000 to their brethren in Canada. It is also of interest that during the depression none of the colonies accepted relief from the government in any form, neither did they use feed or seed loans.

According to the leaders of the Hutterite colonies the last seventy odd years of Hutterite history in America seem to be rosy and prosperous, but as there are two sides to every question so here too the trail which they have traversed since their arrival in 1874 has not always led down-hill. Some of the most bitter experiences which they had to live through were during World War I and to a much lesser extent in World War II.

When the Hutterite delegation appeared before President Grant in 1873 the President made a very prophetic statement. For the next fifty years, he said, it is very likely that the government will not find it necessary to draft its citizens for military service. And so it was. When the Selective Service Act of 1917 and subsequent draft acts went into effect, however, the Hutterites reported for service at the designated camps. The teachings of their fathers as well as their history and traditions taught them that participation in war was sinful. For that reason they refused the uniform as well as all non-combatant service. As a result their experiences in all the camps were far from pleasant. Already on the way to camp patriotic citizens clipped their beards by force and soldiers jeered them on the train because of their style of dress and their attitude towards war. At home the older men were taken by night and were tarred and feathered by some of their neighbors. Now, in time of war, these neighbors were one hundred per cent Americans, but in time of



peace they were known to make a living by stealing live stock and poultry from the Hutterites.

When the Hutterites failed to buy their full quota of liberty bonds because of religious scruples, patriotic businessmen drove off herds of cattle and sheep of the Jamesville Colony valued at \$10,000, purchased liberty bonds and deposited them in the bank at Yankton. Later the bank failed and not a cent was ever realized from this live stock.

These same citizens also threatened to drive off the herds of the Bon Homme Colony but Mr. Wagner of the State Council of Defense protected them.

One day in 1917 a certain Mr. McDonald appeared at the Bon Homme Colony mill and said he wanted to purchase some corn meal. As the colony miller was filling his sack with corn meal McDonald tried to mix into his corn meal some ground glass but was detected by the miller. McDonald then sued the Bon Homme Colony for selling him corn meal in which ground glass had been mixed. The government closed the mill for several weeks and guarded it but later opened it again and nothing more was said.

The story of the two Hutterite brethren who died of mistreatment at Camp Funston in 1918 at the hands of petty army officials is well known and probably needs no comment here.

During World War II most of the young men from the colonies in the United States were drafted to Civilian Public Service Camps. Most of the Hutterites went to Hill City, South Dakota, Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Belton, Montana. In Canada the same course was followed. Unfortunately six Hutterites chose to join the regular army. These, however, automatically lost their membership in the colony and can return to the group only upon doing penance.

The Bon Homme Colony had the experience of losing 1600 acres of their land temporarily during World War II (in 1943). These 1600 acres (half plow land and half pasture) were taken over by the government and used as a bombing field. The government first wished to pay them for the land but they refused such an offer saying that

they would not give it voluntarily but if the government took it, well and good. The government paid taxes on the land amounting to \$400 per year while the Bon Homme Colony had to take their cattle into Nebraska for pasture paying \$1000 for pasture rent and \$400 for trucking. The government agent who came to negotiate for the bombing field left a five dollar bill on the table of the Rev. Michael Waldner, leader of the Bon Homme Colony, and in leaving said that he had never in his life met such people. The land was returned to the Bon Homme people in 1946.

This is a brief resume of the historical background of the Hutterite Colonies. It would indeed be a promising field for further investigation for any ambitious research student in history, economics or sociology. In the Hutterites we have a people who have a unique way of life and who have lived it consistently and conscientiously for more than four centuries.





# THE PRESENT DAY SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND CULTURAL PATTERNS OF THE HUTTERITES IN NORTH AMERICA

*By Marie Waldner*

## *Introduction*

It is not easy to get an accurate picture of the cultural patterns found in contemporary Hutterite Gemeinschaften. To do so as nearly as possible would entail a study of a carefully selected group of colonies, so that the resulting picture would be a composite of the Gemeinschaft pattern in the larger field rather than a reflection of the eccentricities of an individual colony and its environment. Such a selection would eliminate the danger of considering a variant colony or variant behavior patterns as the standard or typical. For example, familiarity limited to an ultraconservative Alberta colony would be as misleading as that limited to colonies like the former Lake Byron colony<sup>1</sup> where a large measure of disintegration has occurred.

To secure this composite picture several things would have to be considered. First of all, the study probably should not be limited to one group of colonies. There are, in all, three major groups stemming from the three original North American mother colonies—Bon Homme, Wolf Creek, and Old Elm Spring. They are known as Schmied Leit after Schmied Michl (Michael Waldner), first leader of the mother colony Bon Homme; Tores Leit for Tores (Darius Walter), leader of the Wolf Creek colony; and Lehrer Leit for Lehrer Jockub (Jacob Wipf), founder and leader of New Elm Spring, the only one of the three organized in America.

Although intermarriage between these three groups occurs and the kinship bonds established tend toward unity, there is a considerable amount of aloofness between colonies of the different groups. There is no formal organiza-

<sup>1</sup> The colony referred to is not the group located there at present, but those residing there previous to the present group. They have recently moved to Montana.

tion that cuts through these group lines and, considering the co-operative nature of the order, there is a rather surprising lack of co-operative effort between them. Certain characteristics, behavior patterns, *Lebensanschauungen*, and even minor items in organization have developed which are more or less peculiar to certain groups.

In the second place, the degree of isolation enjoyed by the colonies would have to be considered in their selection for the study. The degree of disintegration, closely related to isolation or its lack, also enters in.

Third, the people in the community surrounding the colonies chosen might have to be considered for the influence they may have upon them. If the reaction of the outside community to the group observed is to be considered, it would make a considerable difference whether colonies with Bohemian, Mormon, French Canadian, or Mennonite neighbors were selected.

Furthermore, care must be exercised even in the study of an individual colony. The cultural pattern of the group is revealed neither by intelligent, benign leadership nor by problem brethren, rather it takes both extremes and the big majority in between to present a true pattern.

Finally, the background, interests, and unconscious bias of the inquirer himself color the picture, with the result that there are several prevalent views regarding the Hutterites. One is that held by the casual observers who emphasize the different, the spectacular. Writers of popular articles belong to this group. Another is that held by those who see and emphasize deviant behavior, disintegration trends, and the hiatus between belief and practice. That neighbors and outsiders of Hutterite descent often belong to this group may be because closer contacts are more revealing on the one hand and on the other they produce minor irritations which cloud objectiveness. Still another view is that exemplified by idealists who in comparatively recent years have discovered the existence of the order. Their danger lies in becoming so enamored with an ideal that they too lose a measure of their objectivity.

The Hutterite ideal may be all that this last group would wish it to be, but that ideal as practiced by human beings at the present time is a combination of these views. Certainly the practices of the Hutterites are "different." There are definite trends toward disintegration, of which no one is more aware than are the thoughtful elements within the brotherhood itself. And there is a strong nucleus for whom their way of life is their religion, and who would, if need be, die to preserve it.

### *Religious Beliefs of the Hutterites*

Keeping in mind, as far as possible, the aim for a general picture of the Hutterite order as found in North America, we turn our attention to the religious beliefs of the order.

To the Hutterites, God is the creator, the supreme all-powerful being to whom above all else one should give obedience. To them God is not intimately personal. Even in prayer they might feel a certain reserve which would keep them from approaching Him too intimately because of a sincere feeling of thereby showing disrespect to one so holy. Emotional concepts connected with words like conversion and rebirth commonly held by some religious groups are foreign to them.

To the average Hutterite his way of life is his religion. He sees it as the God commanded, God sanctioned, one exclusively right way. Since the detailed pattern is ready cut and divinely sanctioned, his only part is to will to obey it. His acceptance of it produces a peace within him which releases him from the Sturm und Drang faced by those who would cut their own pattern. That this has produced as a by-product a certain amount of complacency is understandable. There is too, throughout the Gemeinschaften, a consciousness of uniqueness, of exclusiveness, a feeling of being Gottes kleine Herde—God's small chosen flock which is following the right way. Yet, knowing they are a small minority, they are not too much perturbed by it. The intense missionary zeal which characterized the movement early in its history has been lost. The communal



pattern of love and mutual aid is limited to the brotherhood and in America the growth of the brotherhood has been almost exclusively through natural increase.

Deets,<sup>2</sup> in his study of the Hutterite order, found that "all sanctioned activity within the community is regarded as religious," and "is ordered around central beliefs." He believes that "with one exception, there is no distinction within the community between sacred and secular," the exception being "that part of the secular which in spite of opposition has permeated from outside." He found that "while the sacred and the secular are not differentiated within the community, there is a differentiation in degree of sacredness or religious importance of beliefs and behavior" and he approached the problem of understanding the Hutterite order by a search for that which they regard as most important as revealed in their behavior.<sup>3</sup> This search led him to the conclusion that their central beliefs are:

... (1) that their way of living is sanctioned by omniscient Deity who must be obeyed even to martyrdom (2) that it is the will of Deity that they live communally, (3) that it is the will of Deity that they practice nonresistance, and (4) that they must live simply, avoiding the outside world, in it but not of it.<sup>4</sup>

Other beliefs held by the Hutterites either were not revealed by their behavior or else were considered of minor importance. Their beliefs concerning the sacraments of baptism and communion have been practiced without receiving special attention or emphasis because the outside world has in recent years offered no threat to them. A belief of relatively lesser importance is that generally held which regards the making or possessing of an image or picture of oneself as wrong. Their belief in a divinely commanded population policy carries such general and deeprooted conviction with the members of the order that it might be mentioned. Hardly important enough to mention and yet interesting is the attitude regarding the use

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this paper I am greatly indebted to Dr. Lee Emerson Deets of Hunter College, New York, with whose interpretations as found in his published material and in his classes on community organization I am in large part in agreement. If I have added an original insight here or there it has been because my, in a sense, shared identity with the Hutterites has made me consider them pertinent.

<sup>3</sup> Lee Emerson Deets, *The Hutterites; A Study in Social Cohesion* (Ph. D. dissertation, Dept. of Political Science, Columbia University, 1939, *passim*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.



of their non-Hutterite neighbors. Their farm implements with few exceptions are modern and their farming has become a highly mechanized process. The crops they raise are determined by soil and climatic conditions of the locale in which they live. Large truck gardens and fruit orchards are raised wherever possible. Products from these, plus the cattle, poultry, and bees found on their farms, furnish most of the food for the table. The surplus of products that cannot be sold in large quantities is peddled to the consumers in nearby towns or sold to customers who come to the Hof.

In some instances milling is carried on, primarily for their own use and for neighboring Bruderhoefer. Custom milling may be done for outsiders and sometimes flour, cream of wheat, and other allied products are sold. Numerous small articles are manufactured for home consumption and occasionally for sale to outsiders. Among such articles brooms are most common.

On the Hof itself are found the huge barns, sheds, and storage bins which the large scale farm operations and livestock and poultry production demand. Shops housing varying trades as determined by the needs and abilities found in the individual colony are found in convenient locations. Among these are well-equipped blacksmith shops, machine repair shops, tanneries, shoemaker shops, broom maker shops, flour mills, and others.

Among the buildings that take care of the immediate needs of living for the Gemeinde are the dwelling houses, a building housing the community kitchen and dining room, another housing the school, which usually serves for church services as well, and possibly a building housing the eating place for the smaller children and the kleine Schule. Frequently a combination of activities is carried on under one roof. Besides these buildings, most Hoefes have a bakery, a laundry, a milk house, an ice house, and a smoke house.

Building material varies according to when the buildings were made and the material most easily available at the time. The style of architecture, too, is determined by the time and place in which it was built and the use to



which it is put. Traditional conservatism favors the retention of old patterns and so the average Bruderhof especially in the dwelling house section, shows the distinct influence of the European peasant housing of a few centuries ago. Where ranches or estates were bought from large private land owners the dwellings are sometimes quite in contrast to the supposedly typical Bruderhof pattern.

The number of people who live on a Bruderhof varies but it is never very large. When the population increases to the point where management would become difficult, the group is divided. Through experience it was found that groups became unwieldy when they were larger than 150 or at most 200. When division occurs, the families who are to migrate are chosen by lot. Actually, however, other factors sometimes enter into the division. Cliques which have developed are sometimes broken up by division, but occasionally the cleavage is made on the basis of these. Sometimes families are exchanged by mutual consent of the two groups. When a daughter colony is established the mother colony assumes certain responsibilities for it. The amount of aid given the new colony depends upon the practice common within the larger group<sup>8</sup> to which the two belong and upon the financial conditions of the mother colony.

The prescribed simple, uniform appearance and attire of the men as well as that of the women is picturesque but incidental. The patterns are European in origin and have become traditional. Their somberness and simplicity are in accord with the belief regarding the sinfulness of pride and worldliness. The uniformity is necessary to a smooth function of the community of goods and to avoiding jealousies and inroads of individualism. That the outside has made encroachments in this area can be seen by the most casual observer. In feminine apparel somber colors have been relieved by contrasts in very bright colors. The current shortage in conservative cotton material is accepted as manna by the younger generation and is serving as a justification for a change in colors which is likely to be

<sup>8</sup> Schmeid Leit; Tores Leit, or Lehrer Leit.

retained. Excellent native tailors and barbers have had a pronounced influence upon masculine attire and appearance in some colonies, notably those near Winnipeg.

Simple but nourishing food is prepared in the large community kitchen. American food habits are gradually being adopted—cakes, pies, and jams are innovations of recent years. Table service is simple though less simple than formerly. Casual observers sometimes are lost in the maze of strange costumes, customs, and ways of doing things. They get the ideas that these are all minutely detailed prescribed rules of Hutterite faith. As a matter of fact, they are not, or only indirectly so. They appear strange only because they have been transplanted out of their time and place setting. Many of them were normal, the average, in the community without as well as within the Gemeinschaft a century or so ago. They are important to the Hutterite, but only because they are traditional, the original or near original patterns set by those who preceded him in the faith, and whom he venerates. So he resists change, any change, for fear of losing those patterns and the principles which invoked them. A fear not without justification, for as he will put it, "Ans fiet zum Onden"—One thing leads to another.

Adult members of the Gemeinde eat their meals in the community dining room. The sexes are segregated to the extent of being seated at different tables. Older people sometimes are served after the rest have finished so that they may enjoy a more leisurely meal. School children do not eat their meals with the grownups but are usually served elsewhere and are under the supervision of the Schullehrer. At the age of approximately 14 or 16 they join the adults at meals and are said to belong to the Leit. One notes a certain amount of satisfaction in the young when they are thus recognized as having arrived at a maturer stage. The minister's meals are served in his private quarters. The reason for this, as well as for the coat of different cut which he wears while officiating, are the same as those in other denominations where distinctive clerical garb is prescribed for ministers.

The buildings used as living quarters usually house approximately four to eight households. The number depends upon the size of the building and the size of the families. Since other needs are taken care of elsewhere, the rooms in the dwelling units are usually combination bedroom sitting rooms. The number of rooms per family depends somewhat on the number, age, and sex of its members. Ideally, the rooms are simply and traditionally furnished, actually formerly forbidden finery and nick-nacks showing the influence of the outside world are tactfully overlooked by all but the oldest and most conservative. So pronounced is this change that where an observer might once have given offense by tactlessly noticing innovations, he is now just as apt to give offense by his failure to notice them. Greatest enthusiasts for the verboten frills, as might be expected, are the young girls, in whose rooms and chests are found expressions of their longing for the beautiful. That what appeals as beautiful is often a reaction from one extreme to the other is not surprising. Not infrequently forbidden finery and cosmetics are worn covertly or kept in chests to be enjoyed privately, as one girl expressed it, "I keep them just for nice."

Members of our individualistic capitalistic society find it strange that despite the lack of individual monetary remuneration a lazy Gemeinschafter is the exception. His simpler tastes and the well organized division of labor made possible by his group living do, however, make many tasks easier and more efficient, so that his work is much less of a strain upon him than is that of the individual farmer.

On a well managed Bruderhof the work to be done on Hof and field is well organized. Men and women with special ability are chosen to supervise the work in which they excel. So there is, for example, a farm boss, a cattle boss, a hog boss, a sheep boss, a poultry boss, a machine shop boss, a garden boss, and so on. Men with special aptitudes in useful trades or crafts are designated as miller, blacksmith, shoemaker, or tanner. The amount of responsibility and authority depends upon the importance of the work. Since farming is the chief work of the group, the



farm boss has the most responsible job. Among women the head cook who works out the menus is also chosen for her ability, as are the women who manage the *kleine Schule*. Under the supervision of these bosses work the crews necessary to carry out the assignments. Much of the actual work, especially where special training and skill is not essential, is rotated.

That a people which works, eats, worships, and lives together would be a sociable people is not surprising. One seldom sees a Hutterite alone. They do not enjoy being alone. Adjustment to individual farm living would be difficult for them. There is much visiting and spending of leisure time together. Bach, in his recent article, "Experiment in Contentment," concludes that the Hutterites must forfeit two things for their Utopia—charm and privacy.<sup>9</sup> One might quarrel with his definition of charm, but certainly he is right about privacy. Except in the most intimate family relationships, it does not exist. Privacy strengthens individualism and individualism is incompatible with communal living, the thing which more than anything else would destroy it. Anyone who would tend to withdraw himself would be considered peculiar. The child is early taught to be gregarious. He is born into a family where children abound. Beginning at the age of about two and a half years, he spends most of his day in the *kleine Schule* with the other children of his age. As one Hutterite minister puts it, "Here the children learn to live together and are taught the communal *Gemeinschaftsleben*."<sup>10</sup> Children are quite generally happy and enjoy singing and playing together. They are usually expert swimmers.

Many Hutterites enjoy hobbies for their spare time. Women often do beautiful cross-stitch embroidery work while men may make small household articles. Copying unpublished manuscripts interests those who enjoy writing and have the perpetuation of their faith at heart. Occasionally one sees work of this nature as beautifully done as that of the monks in the Middle Ages.

<sup>9</sup> Marcus Bach, "Experiment in Contentment," *Coronet*, XX (June, 1946), 139.

<sup>10</sup> David Decker, minister of the Tschetter Colony, Olivet, South Dakota.

The courtship and marriage customs<sup>11</sup> have undergone considerable alteration since the original three Bruderhoefe were established in America. The patriarchal "guidance" in selection of mates by ministers and elders, sometimes with scant attention to the wishes of the participants, has been abandoned. There is still guidance, but of a kind which, for the most part, the young people are glad to accept and which leaves the ultimate decision to them. Weddings are gala affairs. Usually several couples are married at the same time and the event is unique in colony living. Rules are relaxed and everybody enters into the joyous spirit of the celebration. Marital relationships are usually happy. Bickering between husband and wife or parents and children seems to be remarkably absent. Children are scolded and spanked if need be, but not nagged. Women are submissive and obedient and have no voice in the management of the Gemeinde, yet the attitudes and opinions of the men are highly influenced by their wives.

There are no adequate statistics to determine the mental and physical health of the group. A study made of some colonies found a high birth rate and a low death rate, but found that infant mortality was high and concluded that "Once the hazards of infancy have been escaped, the Hutterite community is an unusually healthy place."<sup>12</sup> Possibly a relaxation of the high standards of hygiene with which Friedmann credits the Bruderhoefe of an earlier period<sup>13</sup> may be a contributing factor. In this too there is considerable difference between individual communities. As a whole they are a healthy, comely appearing people.

Most observers credit them with remarkable mental health and usually credit it to the freedom from tension and conflict which they enjoy in their way of life. Every responsibility is shared, their wants are relatively simple, they possess economic security, and they feel confident that God ordered their system. This eliminates much of the

11 A paper on Hutterite Courtship and Marriage was read before the Eastern Sociological Society by Dr. Deets last May. It will be submitted for publication in fuller form this fall.

12 Deets, *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 14. (The study made was for the period from January 1, 1927, to January 1, 1931).

13 Robert Friedmann, "Christian Love in Action—The Hutterites," *Mennonite Life*, I (July, 1946), 39.

fear and uncertainty characteristic of the outside world and produces a feeling of contentment. Where this has been carried to the extreme, mental stagnation is in evidence.

The framework of government under which the individual Gemeinde operates is somewhat as follows: Direction is in the hands of a small group of trustees, variously known by such terms as *Zuigbrieder*, or committee of elders. The membership varies in number and is comprised of the men who hold positions of responsibility in the community. The minister acts as chairman. Also a member of the group is the *Hausholter*, commonly known as "the boss." All physical needs and financial matters are under his management. Under the *Hausholter* serve the numerous lesser bosses, many of whose positions are appointive. Members of this directing board are elected by direct vote of baptized male members. In the choice of ministers, a combination of popular election and lotting is employed. All officials are chosen for life on good behavior. Officials like the farm boss usually resign when the work becomes too strenuous because of their age.

We turn next to the more formal means used in perpetuating their beliefs. These are the church and the school. Church services are held on Sunday morning and on week days after the evening meal. The morning meeting is known as *Lehr*, the evening meeting as *Gebet*. Hymns from their own collections are sung.<sup>14</sup> *Ansagen* is still retained from the days when books were scarce. Sermons written by the early leaders of their faith are read, though some ministers occasionally write sermons of their own. Sunday school is conducted for the children and certain memory work is required of candidates for baptism.

Two schools besides the regular state or province prescribed school are found on most *Bruderhoefe*. The *kleine Schule* is attended by children from approximately two and one-half to five or six years. Here the children are given supervised practice in living together. Hutterites emphasize the need for early training to secure the

<sup>14</sup> *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brueder*, (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, 1914).



subordination of the individual to the group. "Je jinger du in Kind den agnen Willn brechst je beser is es."<sup>15</sup> Women especially chosen to take care of these pre-school children supervise their activities and teach them songs, Bible verses, and prayers. Children from about five to sixteen attend teitscha Schul (German School) where they are taught the faith of their fathers. Its sessions are held before and after the regular English school sessions. The Schullehrer or assistant minister is the instructor.

The secular education prescribed by law is with very few exceptions taught by outside teachers. The reason seems to be the difficulty of adjustment and readjustment encountered by teacher training candidates who have to make the transitions between two alien cultures. Certainly the outside teachers are a disrupting influence brought into the very heart of the Gemeinde. Especially is this true in Manitoba colonies where ". . . most of their schools are under the highly centralized control of one trustee employed by the province and responsible to the Minister of Education" who "employs and discharges teachers . . . and has full authority to direct policies."<sup>16</sup> These policies usually aim at a long-range process of assimilation. The influence of a subject matter attuned to an individualistic, capitalistic culture upon the children of a communal order may become more pronounced as their educational status improves.

Disciplinary measures are sometimes used when a member fails to conform to established behavior. Offenses against the communal system and succumbing to worldliness are considered among the most serious. Communal living makes vigilance in guarding the sex mores especially necessary. Violations are disciplined. An offense which sometimes needs disciplinary action, especially among children, arises out of the fact that they do not have a very clear concept of private property. In the case of baptized adults, punishment ranges from friendly admonition by a brother to excommunication, much after the New Testa-

<sup>15</sup> Statement made by Michael Waldner, minister of Bon Homme Colony, Scotland, South Dakota.

<sup>16</sup> Deets, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

ment pattern. In the case of children or unbaptized persons, corporal punishment is not unknown.

### *Conclusion*

In America, especially in recent years, the Hutterite order faces serious dangers which threaten to undermine the whole system and whose disrupting influences are very pronounced in some colonies. The peaceful assimilation of the group by the outside culture is a gradual process of whose danger some leaders are not unaware. Chief contributing factors to this process are the "... subtly penetrating influences of modern technology,"<sup>17</sup> whose entering wedge has been in the field of agriculture; the outside teachers in their schools; and the influences of a course of study permeated by a culture which is incompatible with their own. The decreasing amount of isolation is serious, especially where groups are located near larger cities.<sup>18</sup> Recognizing the importance of isolation, leaders in a few instances have recently given serious thought to migration to new frontiers.

The relative absence of persecution<sup>19</sup> in the new world has tended to relax vigilance produced by earlier periods of martyrdom. Finally the lack of missionary zeal during the last century has not been healthful for the *Gemeinschaft*.

*Verweltlichung* of some *Bruderhoefe* is far advanced, some deviations from traditional patterns are on the increase in all *Bruderhoefe*, but spectacular examples of deviation can be misleading because they obscure the quiet conformity of the majority. There is still a large nucleus of Hutterites with the sincere will to keep their faith. Wise and devoted leadership, teachers from their own membership for their young, a renewal of missionary zeal, and greater isolation would, under present conditions, seem essential to the continued healthy life of the movement. In the immediate future the movement is probably not in

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>18</sup> For example, colonies located near Winnipeg, Manitoba.

<sup>19</sup> During World War I their adherence to the principle of non-resistance and their refusal to buy war bonds brought them into difficulties which in some instances amounted to persecution.

danger of dying out. It may lose some of its adherents, but the remnant can carry on the ideal of a well ordered way of practical love and brotherhood as it has in the past. During the four centuries of its history, the Gemeinschaft ideal has persisted even when its adherents have not.





## THE FATE OF THE HUTTERITES IN EUROPE

By Robert Friedmann

This morning we have visited a Hutterite colony and I am sure that it has been a rewarding experience to all of us. What we have seen is a continuation and duplication of what once existed on a much larger scale in the Europe of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The scene, to be sure, has changed and so has the time, but I was struck by the close identity of the spirit of the *Bruderhof* on the one side, and the literary remains of the Hutterites of former times on the other side, as I have studied them previously. Their talks and arguments, their behavior and principles, have not changed at all, at least as far as I could observe. "Love" and "Cross" are still to them the two pillars upon which they build their Christian community. Since I gather that we will discuss these two basic points later on in our forum, I will not follow them up in my brief introductory remarks, but rather turn to another question at hand: are these Hutterites here in South Dakota and their related colonies in Canada the only remnants of the once so numerous group of Hutterites? Other speakers tonight will report on new departures in the same Hutterite pattern in England and Paraguay (formerly Germany). Interesting as these recent endeavors are, they do not owe their origin to the great stream of Anabaptist tradition. They are rather a revival than a continuation of sixteenth century beginnings. Thus, our question still remains unanswered whether there exist somewhere in Europe or elsewhere genuine Hutterite Brethren who do not belong to the groups studied here tonight. The answer to this question is: yes and no. Yes, because some settlements still exist in the old countries of Europe, to be specific in Slovakia; no, because they no longer are of the Anabaptist faith or persuasion, but have turned Catholic and do not understand any longer their very background and source of strength.

I think it is good to discuss briefly their history

and present condition as an introduction to our further studies and as a means for a better understanding of the things which we have actually encountered today. Before I will report of my visit to those Slovakian colonies some twenty years ago, let us have a short glimpse of the historical background of these colonies, thereby supplementing the otherwise excellent paper of Brother Hofer of last evening. In the sixteenth century even the most cruel persecution was not able to achieve its aim, the extermination of the "heretics." The very fact that Mennonites and Hutterites still are flourishing in this country is a living proof that persecution does not kill a movement as long as its spirit is alive. The old word of Tertullian, that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," comes true also with regard to the Anabaptists. It has been estimated that not long before the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War the total number of brethren in Hutterite colonies must have amounted to between fifteen and twenty thousand souls. In the eighteenth century, however, it was a different story. The persecution in Austria, now in the hands of the Jesuits, was possibly not as cruel but much more systematic and efficient than in the earlier centuries. It was in the time of the Empress Maria Therese that the last remnants of the Hutterites in Austria, settling both in Slovakia and in Transylvania, felt the enormous impact of the intensified activities of the government and Roman church. In Transylvania, the flock had melted down to hardly more than a handful of brethren, but a new stream of Lutheran transmigrants from Carinthia joined them (after 1750) and with fresh courage revived the old pattern. When persecution did not allow developments in this far corner of the Austrian empire, the brethren, loyal to tradition and faith, broke up their tents and marched on to the unknown East (Russia). The colonies of today derive their population to a great extent from these pilgrims. In Slovakia, on the other hand, the situation developed in a much different way. The old enthusiasm had died out long before and the brethren (more numerous than the Transylvanian group) were not able or willing to withstand



any longer the terrific pressure. Many of their children had been taken away into Catholic schools or convents, and the fathers were worked upon in prisons by Jesuits day after day. For the sake of peace and liberty, they conceded to change their loyalty. (That was between 1760 and 1780) As newly converted Catholics they no longer were called Hutterites, but people nicknamed them "Habaner," a word slavonic popular etymology meaning, may be, "sour-looking people." Their outstanding works of handi-craft are still today known under this name (*Habaner ceramics*).

With this conversion, however, not everything changed at once. The colonies still were there and the spirit of community of goods and brotherhood, was by no means dead. All fields were kept in common. And above all, their German tongue was a strong tie in the otherwise slavonic surrounding.

As mentioned before I visited these Habaner colonies many years ago. They are situated not far from Slovakia's capital Bratislava (Pressburg), the onetime city of coronation of the Hungarian kings. A trainride of about one hour brings one to a large village of clean, thatched roofed cottages of typical Slovakian character. It was not hard to find the "Bruderhof" at the edge of the village. Here some 300 to 500 souls still lived more or less in the old fashioned way yet without any understanding about the "why," one hundred and fifty years after their basic ideas had been crushed, their revered, hand-written devotional books of old had been confiscated and carried away, and their schools had received teachers from outside. Around a large square, the "common," houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were still standing, since very little has been destroyed by fire or war. The tidiness of the buildings and village green was striking. The claybrick houses (ground floor with steep, high roofs) were white-washed and their floor of stamped clay neatly strewn with yellow sand. And here was the *Vorsteher* (a kind of manager, replacing the onetime elder) one Eduard Bernhauser, cobbler by profession, a friendly guide through this little world of his. I was surprised that the group

was still somewhat intact in spite of the lack of genuine Christian instructions. It may be that their ethnic unity was one of the reasons: Germans in a Slovakian surrounding. But the youth, I was told, is slowly drifting away. Since 1918, when the Czecho-Slovakian Republic was established, school is taught exclusively in Slovakian language, and only the older folks still use the German tongue as ever before. They still have a kind of community chest of their own, a community school (but under Catholic supervision), mill, tannery, pond, and similar things are still in common as it was the general usage in Europe during the Middle Ages. They enjoyed also certain special privileges until recently. But their fields were parcelled out into private property in 1863.

Everything seemed to be on the decline, in particular since the great political changes of 1918 when the old Austrian empire broke up and closed national borders became the new ideal. These Habaners of today are in the main peasants and skillful tradesmen, but they are impoverished more and more. The great old trades of pottery (*Majolica*) and cutlery (*Messerschmiede*), which once made them outstanding all over Central Europe, have completely faded out. I saw only poor relicts. Their former assembly place had become a Catholic chapel in which a clay Madonna still gave proof of their respectable skill in ceramics. No books of old are known any longer, although some time ago several volumes were discovered hidden between the bricks of a wall when it was torn down. They have strange ideas about their origin. "Because we were not Catholic," an old woman explained to me, "we had to be baptized again in the new faith, and that is why they called us Anabaptists." To which the expert can but smile. I had a feeling as if walking through a museum. There was sacred ground. Here Andreas Ehrenpreis lived, the last great bishop of the brotherhood (around 1650); here all the hardship of Turkish onslaught was endured (around 1600); I still could admire the good taste of their lovely homes, could see their fire proof thatched roofs, where straw was cemented with clay (a once famous in-

vention), under which roofs cozy attics provided bed rooms as of former days; I still enjoyed the green-tiled cooking ranges (*Herd*) in the main rooms downstairs, and so on, but the lifeblood of all these things was gone. They told me that once the Bon Homme colony, South Dakota, sent money that some brethren should come over, yet after one year or so the brethren returned to Europe, liking their own way better. Now and then letters were exchanged but there was little interest in those far away relatives and the contacts died away.

And this is the conclusion I came to draw: It was not the economic set-up which guaranteed success and thriftiness. It was and is the faith in the great Christian fundamentals of love and brotherhood and discipleship and suffering which brought about all these amazing features. Those brethren who had not been willing to take up the pilgrimage for conscience sake but who stayed behind, have, it is true, preserved some of the old institutions. But they have forsaken the meaning and the strength and the vindication of this way. No longer is it a challenge to the world. In fact, hardly anybody (besides some folklorists) knows about these people, while the brethren here in America continue to attract the attention of the alert ones. It is certainly not the body which shapes the mind but it is always the spirit which also shapes the body.

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(As for further reading compare the speaker's recent articles in *Mennonite Life*, I, 2, July 1946, "Christian Love in Action, the Hutterites," and in *Menn. Quart. Rev.*, XX, 1946, "The Epistles of the Hutterite Brethren.")





## THE HUTTERITES IN ENGLAND

*By Glen R. Miller*

High in the beautiful Cleve Hills of Shropshire, England, where on many days the clouds do not lift from the very ground until after midday, there exists a very young but vibrant and rapidly growing Hutterite colony. Not only in its idyllic setting and texture, is it unique, but especially is it so in being the English expression of the Hutterian way of life. Most of its present members were a few short years ago ordinary Englishmen, tradesmen, teachers, students, draftsmen, engineers, and but few were farmers. In this short period of time the required adjustments have been tremendous. They had to learn farming, dairying, gardening, carpentering, laundering, and perhaps the most difficult of all—how to live in community.

To appreciate this group properly it is necessary to review briefly their history since 1920, when Eberhard Arnold, a truly great and inspiring leader, began in Germany a type of Christian communal living which ten years later, after a visit to America, resulted in organic union with the Hutterites. The Nazi movement forced the group out of Germany in several stages, with all having settled West of London in the Gotswood Hills by 1937. Here for several years the colony prospered greatly, growing to such a number, that a second Bruderhof was established. In March of 1940 there were 318 men, women and children living in the two communities. With the coming of the war, new difficulties arose. So many of their members being German, they were looked upon with suspicion, even their neighbors clamoring for their internment. Furthermore, they lost many of their markets. The way looked so difficult that by April of 1941 all but three had emigrated to Paraguay. These three were left behind to consummate the legal transactions involved in selling lands and machinery. But before these three could leave to join their brothers, there were twenty. And the new members being British, the government refused to let them

leave England. There was but one thing to do—start a new Bruderhof and that in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties. They had no farm, no machinery or livestock and this was in the midst of England's desperate war. Furthermore, all the skilled farmers had gone to Paraguay. But in 1942 they were able to buy a farm of 182 acres, the Lower Bromden Farm, something like twelve miles out of Bridgnorth, Shropshire.

By the time that I was able to visit them in August of 1944 I found a smoothly running organization with more than eighty members, including twenty-six children. They had added a second adjoining farm of about one hundred seventy acres, and were rapidly developing their dairy herd, their lands and buildings. All of the ancient stone buildings, even the stables, that could be spared had been converted to living quarters, and a considerable number of new wooden huts had been built. One long barracks type of building served as the common dining hall. Another new building had been constructed as the school house.

Their children were a delight—well dressed, strong and healthy; at certain periods of the day they were allowed to roam where they wished, climb over tractors, motorcycles, or follow the men in the fields or in the lush five acre garden. The children were well taught, since so many of the Hutterian women had previously been school teachers. Though the adult members deliberately chose for themselves a low standard of living, eating too frugally as it seemed to me, this was not so for the children. Not all the milk went to the market.

It is impossible not to be deeply moved by these fine, cultured, earnest, hardworking people. There is far more there than magnificent scenery, or the peace of open country and hills, or the occasional all day frolic by men, women and children, in picking the wild blackberries or hazelnuts which grow in profusion along the roadside or fence row. In the words of Mrs. Eberhard Arnold, "The Wind of God blows" strong amongst these English Hutterians. They have a deep sense of their mission—their responsibility to society. They frequently aver that one of their chief ob-



jectives is to demonstrate that the Kingdom of God can be lived here and now, with the unity and love of brotherhood. By their literature, by sending out their messengers (I heard one of them speak in a little Mission in the heart of London), and by the practice of the open door or the invitation to anyone who wishes to come and live with them, they seek to gather in all who feel the urge towards community. No one is barred, be he young or old, rich or poor, cultured or unlettered. It is not an easy way as history has repeatedly taught. After the death of Eberhard Arnold, and in the light of the privations, struggles, and perplexities of twenty years, Mrs. Arnold advises all who are interested in beginning such a life, "Begin only if you have a real foundation, a basis of faith beneath your feet; but if this is the case, if with several of your friends you become united as to way and goal, then do not stop at discussion, but act!" Mrs. Arnold pointed out that what they wanted was not money and possession but sincere and devout hearts.

The present spiritual leaders of the English group are keenly aware of the pitfalls ahead of them, of the danger of losing contacts with the needs of the world. They are doing all in their power to keep abreast of the times, to grapple with the forces that tend to deterioration, to a loss of the sense of mission.

The present high quality of this group is due to the influx of those outside Hutterianism. If a strong growth from without as well as from within can be maintained, a high quality is assured. Or perhaps it were better to say that if the present high quality is maintained the continued growth from without is certain.



## THE HUTTERITES IN PARAGUAY

*By Willard H. Smith*

My first and only contact with Hutterites was in Paraguay. I am sorry that I did not know or even suspect, while in Paraguay, that I would have such an assignment as this in a Mennonite cultural conference in the United States. Had I known it I would have observed more closely and asked more questions while on the field. While I cannot speak as an authority on the Hutterites, I am happy to share my impressions and observations about these pilgrims in Paraguay.

These pilgrims, as already indicated, stem from that group of seekers after religious truth organized in Germany in 1920 by Eberhart Arnold. After the Nazis came to power it became increasingly difficult for this group to continue its way of life and it was finally forced to migrate. It is interesting to observe that while the German Mennonites were able to compromise with and adjust to the new situation the Hutterites were not. I was told that a prominent German Mennonite was visiting the *Bruderhoeffe* at the time the Nazi police descended upon the Hutterites on one occasion shortly before their migration. This Mennonite brother hastened to explain to the police, and make clear beyond all question, that he was not one of the group. The Hutterites thought that this Mennonite brother was not as helpful on this occasion as he might have been.

The migration from England, with her traditional respect for civil and religious liberty, is a little more difficult to explain. But the 1940 war crisis for England, together with the fact that the Hutterites, many of whom were German, were located in or near a war area, make it understandable why some Englishmen, if not the English government, should have made life difficult, if not miserable, for this strange people.

The Hutterites, with the aid of the good offices of the MCC, therefore, chose Paraguay as their new home. To



this country over 4,000 Mennonites had already come and had been given a magnificent grant of privileges, including that of exemption from military service. Paraguay offered these privileges to the newcomers. The first group, some 200, settled late in 1940 next to the Mennonite colonies of Fernheim and Menno, which are located in the largely uninhabited western part of Paraguay known as the Chaco. Here they remained but a few months, however, feeling that they were unequal to the task of making a success of the venture in that hot, inhospitable land. After receiving the favorable report of an investigating committee these Hutterites moved into East Paraguay, again next to a Mennonite colony, namely, Friesland. Here, some thirty-five miles east of the Paraguay river, they purchased a 20,000 acre tract of land known as Primavera. The Mennonites came with their wagons to the river port, Rosario, and transported them to their new home. For the first weeks, however, the Hutterites lived in the Friesland Mennonite villages while the Hutterian men prepared the barest facilities for living at Primavera. But the Mennonites were too poor themselves to give much in the way of substantial aid. Shortly after this removal from the Chaco the second and last contingent of the Brethren, approximately 150 souls, came from England to join the group at Primavera. While facilities for taking care of this enlarged group were still quite inadequate, and some hardship and suffering were experienced, they were all happy to be united once more. All but the three members left behind in England to wind up business affairs were now in their new homeland to start life again on a few frontier.

While many of the Hutterian pilgrims had moved for conscience sake a number of times before this, conditions of life in this new homeland were and are quite different from anything they had previously experienced in Europe. The colony now has two *Bruderhoefe* with a total of some 430 souls.

From Asuncion the colony is reached by river boat up the Paraguay river to Rosario, a distance of some 90 or 100

miles, and then inland by wagon some 35 miles as already indicated. The roads, as in most of Paraguay, can be called roads only by courtesy and could be "negotiated" by automobiles or trucks only with great difficulty even if these were available. Located just on the temperate side of the Tropic of Capricorn the crops raised are sub-tropical and such as are common to East Paraguay, namely: manioc, peanuts, sugar cane, cotton, pineapples, bananas, citrus fruits, melons, kaffir corn, corn and garden vegetables. The rain-fall is usually ample. The methods of farming are simple, no power driven machinery being used as yet. Even the implements drawn by horses or oxen are small and simple. Much of the field work, especially at first, has been done by hand. One member of the colony worked for several years for a United States agricultural mission which is assisting the Paraguayan people in improving their agriculture. This man, who became an expert with the mission, is now back in the colony giving the brethren the benefit of improved scientific agriculture in Paraguay. In this respect the Brethren have been more far-sighted than the Mennonites.

The buildings one finds on the *Bruderhoeje* are now, for the most part, fairly substantial. Raw brick buildings with thatched roofs were the usual type constructed at first. For the past several years they have been making burnt brick and this material is now largely used for construction.

Economically, conditions have been difficult for the Hutterian Brethren, though naturally less so in the recent past than at first. What resources they had when they left England were soon used in the long journey to Paraguay and in getting a bare start. They, therefore, have been free in asking for help from various sources. Some of their resources have been used also in paying Paraguayans for performing some of the harder labor in the colony. The Brethren have been criticized somewhat for this dissipation of much needed resources. Their explanation is that they themselves, coming from various walks of life where they were not accustomed to such difficult manual labor, were unequal to the task in sub-tropical Pa-

Paraguay. Some of the help on which they have come to depend is the money which the new group in England has been sending them. This amounts to thousands of dollars annually. They try to secure additional cash, which is necessary to purchase the needed things not produced in the colony, by selling either services or goods to the outside world. Several of the finer quality products which they sell are toys, fine wood work and honey. One of the rooms in their center in Asuncion is maintained as a market place for these products.

As to health matters, the Hutterites should not suffer from a lack of doctors. Three European trained doctors, two of whom are women, serve the colony. Soon after the Hutterites arrived in Paraguay, the MCC arranged with them to build a hospital which would serve the needs of the Friesland Mennonites and the Paraguayans of the community as well as the Hutterites. One thousand dollars was furnished by each of three North American groups—the Mennonites, Friends and the Brethren Church. MCC supplied one of its workers, Vernon Schmidt, to supervise the construction of this hospital. Unfortunately, the co-operation anticipated between the various groups in the community has not materialized. Charges and counter-charges have been made as to who is responsible. The Mennonites say that the prices charged by the Hutterites are too high and the latter reply that their prices for medicine and medical service are standard and that they cannot afford to sell them for less. Other matters also enter into the picture and it is difficult to say who is responsible. The blame no doubt is wholly on neither side.

Possibly part of the difficulty is due to the fact that there are some differences in belief between the Hutterites and Mennonites in Paraguay, as well as elsewhere. I am also interested in the question as to whether there are differences between the Hutterites of Paraguay and those of North America. I am therefore happy to have this privilege of visiting the colonies in South Dakota and of hearing more about their beliefs. Considering the differences in background and the cosmopolitan character of the Para-



guayan group it would be surprising if there were no differences. Some few differences of which I am cognizant may be due to the largely urban background of the Paraguayan group and the rural background of the North American Brethren. This may explain the greater stress which the Paraguayan group puts on education and cultural matters. The greater sense of mission and missionary activity which those in Paraguay have may also be due, at least in part, to this difference in background. One of the reasons given for not wanting to remain in the Chaco was that there were not enough people there among whom they could let their light shine. And one of their disappointments in East Paraguay, where there are more people, has been that their growth, other than through natural increase, has been very small. As to community of goods I am sure that Hutterites nowhere are more devoted to the idea than are these. As to non-resistance I doubt whether there are Hutterites or Mennonites anywhere who hold more tenaciously to the principle than do these. As a matter of fact, their testimony on this point has been much more consistent than has that of many Paraguayan Mennonites or, for that matter, of many North American Mennonites. In this connection also it might be noted that the Hutterians kept themselves free from involvement in international politics and false and inconsistent ideological ideas of recent years whereas many of the Paraguayan and Brazilian Mennonites did not.

In conclusion we find here a most interesting experiment of a people trying to carry out, in a strange Latin American environment, their conception of Jesus' way of life. With less emphasis on theology and religious practices and forms of worship than that usually given by Mennonites, they are struggling forward in their communal way of life, experiencing some failures as well as successes, but apparently becoming more and more firmly established with the passing of time.



## "A PROGRAM OF ADULT EDUCATION FOR MENNONITE COLLEGES"

*Panel Discussion Summarized by Paul R. Shelly*

### I

#### *Why Adult Education?*

The panel goes on the assumption that the Mennonite colleges exist for the purpose of serving their entire constituencies. Thus, our colleges must serve the large percentage of people of all ages in the home churches as well as the small percentage of the total group that make use of the colleges to secure a college education. Actually, in an ideal sense the Christian college can in this way be utilized to help to maintain the Christian faith as it has been interpreted by our particular Church groups. The Christian college can certainly interpret this faith to the student body and also attempt to create on the campus a miniature Christian society where faculty members and students endeavor to carry out all of the implications of the gospel of Jesus Christ in their daily lives. Then, as the members of the faculty and student body go out into the churches they can interpret this way of life to all of the members of the constituency and thus help to establish this heritage in all of our groups. This ideal has, of course, not been reached but is the overall aim of our colleges and certainly can not be attained without a dynamic far-reaching program of adult education.

### II

#### *Examples of Adult Education on the Campuses of Our Mennonite Colleges*

Adult education is carried on by our colleges both through activities on campus and through activities off campus. This summary is not a survey of activities in either of these realms. It is rather a group of examples which describe in part some of the activities in the field



of adult education carried out by the colleges represented on the panel, namely, Bethel, Goshen, Tabor, and Bluffton. A summary will first be given of examples of adult education on our campuses.

Goshen college has sponsored the short-term winter Bible school for a number of years. This is usually of six weeks duration. Young people and older people come to the college for this period and attend classes in Bible and Christian Education conducted by members of the faculty and also other leaders which are brought to the college for this event. Another phase of adult education is the music and lecture series. A number of our colleges have provided programs of this nature. Bethel college probably has the most far reaching program in this field. This is called the *Memorial Hall Series*, which usually consists of five numbers. This includes some of the leading lecturers and musical talent in the country. Bluffton and some of the other colleges have a similar program on a smaller scale. Another aspect of adult education is in the field of music. A number of the colleges sponsor a community chorus. The "Messiah" is presented in this way by several colleges.

There is a second field of adult education offered on the college campus. A number of schools conduct special classes. Thus, one or two of the schools have attempted evening classes although none of the schools on the panel are doing much along this line at present. Some of the schools do offer some correspondence work which is another form of adult education.

There is one more type of adult education on the college campus which should be included in this discussion. The colleges are training many young people for leadership in the church. This is done through formal classes and also through the practical experience young people secure through deputation work, teaching Sunday school classes, and through other practical efforts. Occasionally our colleges are criticized because some of the young people who graduate do not enter into the work of the home churches. This has happened on occasion but it should be pointed out too that many of our young people have been trained in

our Mennonite colleges to serve in their home churches more effectively.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of activities in the field of adult education which are offered on our campuses but they do give a brief summary of some of the work being done.

### III

#### *Examples of Adult Education in Our Mennonite Colleges Off the Campus*

There is much that can be done in the field of adult education off campus in the future. Much more can be attempted by way of working out a concrete and organized program. However, it must also be said that much has been done by our colleges in this whole field of adult education off campus, i. e., in taking the faculties away from the college to the people in the local communities.

##### 1. *Extension Classes*

A number of colleges have had extension classes by approved teachers. These teachers have been both from the college and from other sources approved by the college. A few of the Mennonite schools are looking forward to more work of this nature.

##### 2. *Christian Workers Institutes*

Last year Bluffton college inaugurated the plan of Christian Workers institutes in local churches. The college worked out a list of topics on which the members of the faculty were able to speak or lead discussions. This list was sent to the ministers of the conferences which the college serves. The plan of the week-end institute was to have a service on Saturday evening, one on Sunday morning, and then have a Worker's conference on Sunday afternoon. Four such institutes were held during the year of 1945-46. Usually three or four members of the faculty participated in each institute. The local church chose the members of the faculty that it wanted for the institute as well as the topics it wanted to have on the program. In this way the needs of the local churches could be met.

### 3. *Summer Retreats*

A number of the members of the faculties of the various Mennonite colleges have made contributions to the Retreat program. This whole field of young people's retreats is very productive since it means that a member of the faculty can give his undivided attention to this work. During the school year he is not able to do his best work if he has to rush from school to a meeting and then rush back again.

### 4. *Individual Speakers*

Some members of the faculties in each of the Mennonite colleges have made a marked contribution in the field of adult education through their personal visits to churches throughout the school year and throughout the summer months. Prof. Walter H. Hohmann, Bethel College, has gone to Canada for a number of summers, conducting choirs in local churches for a few days and then having a music festival at the close of the period. This work has been greatly appreciated. This past summer Prof. J. P. Klassen, Bluffton College, spent the entire summer visiting churches in Canada. If we were to have a list of messages given by all of the members of the faculties of our Mennonite colleges for a year's period we would see that much has been done in reaching our churches through this means. All of this can be classified under the general heading of adult education.

### 5. *Writing*

Certainly writing must also be included in the field of adult education. Some of the faculties have been far more productive than others in this field. However, contributions have certainly been made by all of our faculties and the books and the articles that have been written have played a vital role in the whole area of adult education.

### 6. *Students*

The many student groups that visit the churches must also be considered as a part of the program of adult education. Hence, one must include choir trips, gospel team trips, and all student groups that represent the colleges in the churches.



#### IV

##### *Peculiar Opportunity Today*

The year 1946-1947 will offer a peculiar opportunity in the field of adult education both on campus and off campus. On campus we have our increased enrollments, taxing the physical plant to the utmost and at the same time taxing the energies of the personnel. At the same time the need will also be accentuated in our local churches. The men from C. P. S. and the men from the army will be returned. They will be facing the problem of being integrated in the home communities. They will also be looking for opportunities in the field of education and service in their home communities even though they are not able to go to college. The members of the faculties will be needed to meet this need.

#### V

##### *Problems of Adult Education*

While the need is great it is also true that the time and energy of the personnel will be taxed to the utmost on the campuses. This is the paradox of the situation. The problem for the members of the faculties will be how to handle the task of teaching the college and the program of adult education in the churches at the same time. Faculty members should be at the college most of the time to carry out their work most effectively. Yet, the call of the churches comes too. There is no easy solution to the problem. One suggestion is to make provision in the time schedule for a few members of the faculty to spend some time in the churches.

Probably another suggestion is to utilize the summers more effectively. Certainly with the proper co-ordination more of the members of our faculties could serve our churches during the summer months in different ways. Summer retreats have been more and more common in all of our churches. More leadership could be provided for these groups. Then too, members of the faculties could visit churches for short or long periods depending on the need.

## VI

*The Future of Adult Education*

The need for adult education is obvious and is accepted by all of the Mennonite colleges. Much has been done in the past although much of this has been unorganized. There are some problems to face but certainly each of our colleges will have to think through its program more carefully in the future and work out plans to serve its entire constituency more effectively.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE HUTTERIAN WAY OF LIFE FOR OTHER MENNONITE GROUPS

*Panel Discussion Summarized by Paul R. Shelly*

Groups can be evaluated in two ways. The first is to evaluate them in the light of certain presuppositions or assumptions. In this approach their life may be compared or contrasted with other groups but the evaluation is of the group itself. This approach may have great significance as an objective study for an outsider or for the members of the organization that is studied.

The second approach is to evaluate a group with the purpose of discovering some phases of its life which could well be followed by others in an attempt to maintain their own way of life.

I am taking the latter approach in my evaluation of the Hutterian brethren. Obviously, this method will not offer any value judgments on the way of life itself. It does assume, however, that there are certain emphases in this group which it would be well for us to emulate. I want to point out nine of these emphases in the Hutterian way as implications for other Mennonites.

1. There is a need to determine our basic beliefs.

The visitor to the Bon Homme colony becomes more and more convinced that the Hutterian brethren believe certain doctrines and principles and that they are tenaciously attempting to hold on to them. Living in an age in which men have minimized the significance of beliefs other Mennonites can well learn from these brethren that in order to maintain a way of life we need to know what that way of life includes.

2. There is a need to work out a method to carry out our basic beliefs.

Observing life among the Hutterian brethren, one soon discovers that they have devised methods to maintain their basic beliefs. Hence, as we listened to a description of



their life and as we observed this life we became aware of the fact that the entire pattern of living centered around "The community of goods." This is the major tenet of their faith. We can well learn that we too must devise methods to maintain our beliefs in the kind of a world in which we live. It is not enough to preach and to pass resolutions but we must discover ways and means to transmit our beliefs to future generations.

3. There is a need to have courage to remain true to our beliefs at all times in all areas of life.

One feels that the Hutterian brethren are a group of people who have had the courage to remain true to their convictions in spite of persecution, being willing to move from country to country when their way of life was threatened. Thus, in the first World War many of the Hutterian brethren moved to Canada in order that they might be permitted to live in accordance with their beliefs. Compromise has entered into Mennonite circles more and more, immediate gain determining our actions rather than eternal principles. We need the reminder of these brethren to follow Peter's example in time of crises and say: "We must obey God rather than men."

4. There is a need to recognize that a way of life can be maintained easiest if it is recognized as a total way of life.

The young people in a bruderhof unite with the group at the rather late age of eighteen to twenty-one. At this time they voluntarily enter into a total way of life which will be different from the culture surrounding them. Hence, the Hutterian brethren do not have to maintain each distinct part of their way of life separately. They maintain the total way of life. We have departmentalized our principles to a great extent and have made so many exceptions to our basic beliefs so that our Christian life becomes almost a list of rules. There may be very little connection between separate issues so that actually each issue must be decided on its own merits rather than in the light of eternal principles. We need to determine again the basic parts of

the Christian life and then make clear to converts that to be a Christian means to bear fruit in all of these areas.

5. There is a need to realize that fellowship plays a large part in the maintenance of the Mennonite way of life.

One feels as he visits this group that the idea of fellowship plays a large role in the lives of the members. All of the activities in the entire colony are carried on as a unit. The members of the group have fellowship with each other in every area of life. We need to catch this vision of fellowship. The early church had strength because the members were bound together in Christian life, fellowship. We have neglected this area in our churches. We must realize anew that this is one of the vital parts of our total Christian life.

6. There is a need to realize anew that if a way of life is to be maintained a system of discipline must be devised and applied.

We were told that if a member violates any of the basic tenets of the group he must appear before the minister. If he fails to repent he is excommunicated. There are no exceptions to this rule. We were also informed that very few people leave the group. When one considers that only about two hundred and fifty members settled in South Dakota in 1874 and that now the total membership resulting from that initial group numbers around ten thousand, one is aware that few members were lost to the group. We have become more and more reticent to use discipline. This is more true in some Mennonite groups than in others. I do not wish to discuss methods of discipline or degrees of discipline but simply to emphasize the fact that if we want to maintain our heritage we must have a pure church and that principles must be regarded as more important than numbers.

7. There is a need to realize that the work of Christ and the Church is accomplished by each person taking his own role and thus contributing to the whole.

Each member of the group has some particular role

to fill in the total life of the bruederhof. Leaders are needed and so there is the "boss," the preacher, the teacher, and the elders. Then there are the various bosses over particular endeavors. We met the hog boss who supervises the whole hog project. The entire life in the bruederhof is organized in this way. It seems to me that here is a lesson for us to learn. It is not new for it is a part of the teaching of the entire New Testament. Jesus illustrated this in the parable of the talents. Paul illustrated this principle too in the parable of the church in which he likens the church to parts of the body as each part fulfills its own function in relation to the whole. We need to learn that in Christ's sight there is no distinction between important and unimportant tasks but that all have equal significance in His sight. We need to learn that in the church of Jesus Christ each person must dedicate his all and that the total task of the kingdom can only be accomplished as each contributes his part to the whole.

8. There is a need to work out a practical system of mutual aid.

There is a sense of security that can be attained through the type of life that is lived in the bruederhof. The crippled, the sick, the orphan, the aged, are all cared for by the group. If any other bruederhof is suffering because of crop failure or some other reason help is given there. We have gone more and more to secular groups to take care of our needy. We need to learn again that the Scriptures teach us, "Bear ye one another's burdens. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

9. There is a need for a positive expression as well as a negative expression of our way of life.

To the visitor the Hutterian way of life seems to be a long list of prohibitions for certainly the casual observer can see that most of the luxuries of modern life do not find a place in the bruederhof. However, when one probes deeper he is aware that there is here a distinct cultural pattern and a distinct religious approach which



forms a whole way of life. We have too long stressed prohibitions in our churches. We have condemned many forms of modern culture. We have been quite slow, however, in developing positive ways and means of expressing our faith. We have made much progress in recent years but there still needs to be much more work done in the future in this area.



## AN EVALUATION OF THE HUTTERIAN WAY OF LIFE FROM THE SOCIOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

*By J. Winfield Fretz*

As a result of observations and conversations during the Cultural Conference two general points concerning the Hutterian way of life became more clear to me. These points pertain to the basic institutions of the family and the church. The first is that in the Hutterian way of life the family as a unit is much less important than in Mennonite communities or in society as a whole. This is true because among the Hutterites the family as a unit performs fewer functions. Reproduction is the primary function of the family among the Hutterites. Protection of the children by the parents, guidance in making vocational choices, earning a living for the family, and those other functions generally associated with parenthood are correspondingly less important among Hutterites because they are performed by the larger group known as the Brotherhood.

The second observation is that the church as an organization from an external physical point of view is much less important than in Christianity generally. The church is not an organization along with any other organization to which members belong. The church is the community. It is the only social institution, outside the family, to which Hutterites belong. From a standpoint of buildings and organization the church is quite unimportant. It is primarily significant as an organization because it is the bearer of a sacred tradition. The tradition is the Hutterian "Way" which is clearly defined in the Chronicle and the other sacred writings. They have become sacred through the centuries and have been accepted as infallible as a rule and guide for life. As was expressed by spokesmen for the Hutterian group they feel that there can be no improvement on these sacred writings.

### *Evaluation*

From a positive critical point of view a number of



things can be said in favor of the Hutterian way of life. First, it provides a high degree of social organization; a sense of social solidarity and permanence with a minimum of personal maladjustment and conflict. This is evidenced by the complete absence of divorce. The few mentally ill, the small amount of delinquency, the complete absence of suicides and major crimes, and in general the absence of any evidence of group disorganization. A further advantage of the Hutterian way is that it has worked out a method of preserving the ideals and the principles which it professes. The Hutterians actually practice what they preach in the matter of non-resistance. Almost all of the boys who were drafted went to Civilian Public Service camp to give their witness to the non-resistant way. The absolute sharing of material goods results in a thoroughgoing communism. This very definitely minimizes the materialism which Christian people always condemn and at the same time condone. The Hutterian way puts meaning into the doctrine of simplicity, while the education of the Hutterites prepare members for a life of suffering and martyrdom in case that should become necessary to preserve their way of life.

A further positive feature of the Hutterian way is the effective development of a group mind. The creation of a Christian attitude one toward another. This is accomplished by the development of an early emotional attachment on the part of the child between the ages of 2 and 3 years as he is taught to play with other children. The Hutterian child is thus made group conscious and his individualistic tendencies are curbed at a very early age, thus making unnecessary the decontaminating process that a child in a more highly competitive and individualized society needs to undergo.

A general observation and one which is quite commonplace is that the Hutterian way develops a sense of personal security as a result of the group's organization and sharing of the total responsibilities for meeting the economic, social and religious functions of life.

By way of critical negative comments I would say that

the Hutterian way fails to develop a well rounded individual personality in the sense in which we generally think of a mature person. One from the outside gets the impression that there is much latent talent and great personal resources that stagnate and waste away because in the Hutterian plan there is no opportunity for their development. There is occasion for enlarged personal development only in the case of a few, such as the "boss" or the minister who are called upon to assume leadership for the entire brotherhood.

What can be said of the individual can also be said of the group, namely, that the group resources are not fully developed or used. One sees in the Hutterian way great potentials for the use of the group's labor and talents and skills toward benevolent deeds in a needy world. At the present time these group resources are used for the benefit and satisfaction of the Hutterites themselves.

The Hutterian way also seems to produce extreme complacency. There is no doubt in the mind of the Hutterite that his way is the right way. It is therefore no longer open to criticism from within, and criticism from without is not seriously considered because it is assumed that the outsider is not "one of us." This complacency tends to result in a lack of social consciousness and eventually in spiritual and cultural decay.

Finally, Hutterian brethren are not exploratory or experimental in the realm of invention and discovery, nor is the present generation of Hutterian brethren motivated by any missionary zeal for their way of life. This is difficult to understand in view of the certainty the Hutterites feel about their way of life for Christians. This point, however, was recognized as indefensible by members of the group and for that reason it is not necessarily inevitable in the Hutterian way. It is entirely possible that Hutterians will again become missionary minded as they were in earlier periods of their history.

#### REMARKS BY ROBERT FRIEDMANN

The question of the "community of goods" was raised and as a kind of criticism it was brought out that it is most

arbitrary to pick out a few verses of the Book of Acts (4:32-37; also 5:1-11) and to base upon them the entire way of life. A discussion developed as to other places of reference in the Bible and as to some parallels in the history of the Christian church. All these arguments did not seem very central and failed to convince the audience as to the deeper meaning and reasons of the Hutterite way.

Here Robert Friedmann wanted to add a few points toward clarification and a better understanding or appreciation. He said about this: It would be misleading to think that the Hutterites started and continued their peculiar way only on the ground of scriptural "literalism." Not because of a specific commandment of the Bible did Jacob Hutter and his followers venture this most difficult and challenging way. There is very little if anything legalistic with the Hutterites, at least not during their great period in the 16th and early 17th century, and all this quoting of Acts 4 (also today by Rev. Michael Waldner) is nothing but a scriptural corroboration of a once chosen way.

The facts, as they come out so clearly from Hutterite writings of old as well as from personal conversations today on the Bruderhof, are these: their community of goods is the direct outcome of a very deep understanding of the spirit of Christ's teaching of brotherly love. Community of goods is in the interpretation of the Hutterites the highest expression and at the same time highest symbol of this love. Nothing matters to them more than just this love for which they have sacrificed practically everything, even their lives. Love is to them no sentimental affair but a most concrete concern for everybody, and means a material sharing with the brother. There is nothing "utopian" in this teaching. A true disciple of Christ cannot evade to go this way . . . thus they teach. In 1652 Andreas Ehrenpreis, then a bishop of the brotherhood in Slovakia, published a booklet of 200 pages (reprinted in Scottdale in 1920), entitled, *Ein Sendbrief, Gemeinschaft, das höchste Gebot der Liebe betreffend*



(An epistle concerning community of goods, the highest commandment of love). Here we find this point unequivocally stated.

There is still another argument advanced by the Hutterite Brethren in their writings, why they practice this kind of communism and fought for it. This argument is quite apart from the first more scriptural one, and is very seldom mentioned in the literature. And yet, it is of prime importance. It runs about as follows: the human nature is in general very imperfect and far away from anything Christian. Man in his natural state is above all a devotee of his own self-will, self-interest, self-centeredness, in brief, of his selfishness. It counts for the basic enstrangement from the Divine above us.

*Gottes Wort wär nicht so schwer  
Wenn nur der Eigennutz nicht wär.*

(from the *Great Article Book*, 1547 or later. Translated: "God's Word would not be so difficult [to be carried out] if there would not be human selfishness.")

If that is true, they say, then in order to become a true disciple of Christ man needs most of all a way that will assist him in the "conquest of selfishness." This conquest they call with a good old term of mystical origin *Gelassenheit* (formerly more loosely translated as "resignation"). It says that one should not hang one's heart upon earthly goods but rather become free from that propensity. It can be achieved best by voluntary practice of community of goods where nothing is one's own private property any longer. Thus the way of discipleship begins.

Sharing, living cooperatively, that is the Hutterite alternative to the Holy Poverty of the Franciscan (or Mendicant) movement which is foreign to Anabaptism although both principles derive from the same spirit of search for practical and concrete love and discipleship.

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